Prelude to the Kirov

Dance and Dancers

JUNE 1961

This month's full ballet guide

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ALLA OSIPENKO and ALEXANDER GRIBOV

of the Leningrad State Kirov Ballet in *Stone Flower*, the ballet with which the company opens its Covent Garden Season

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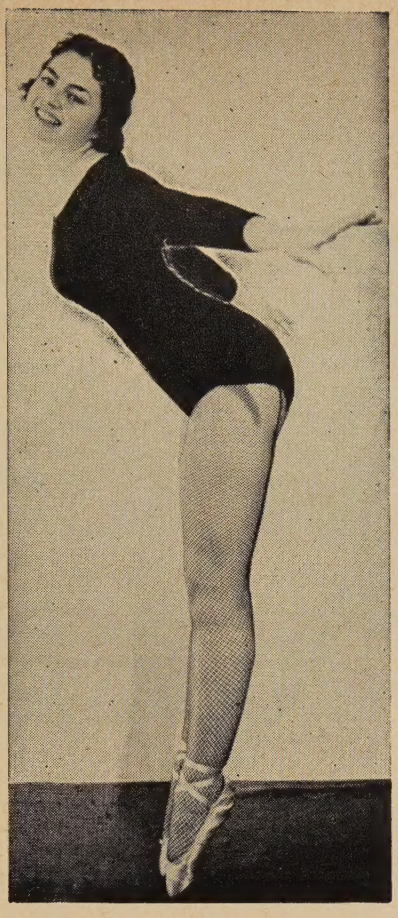

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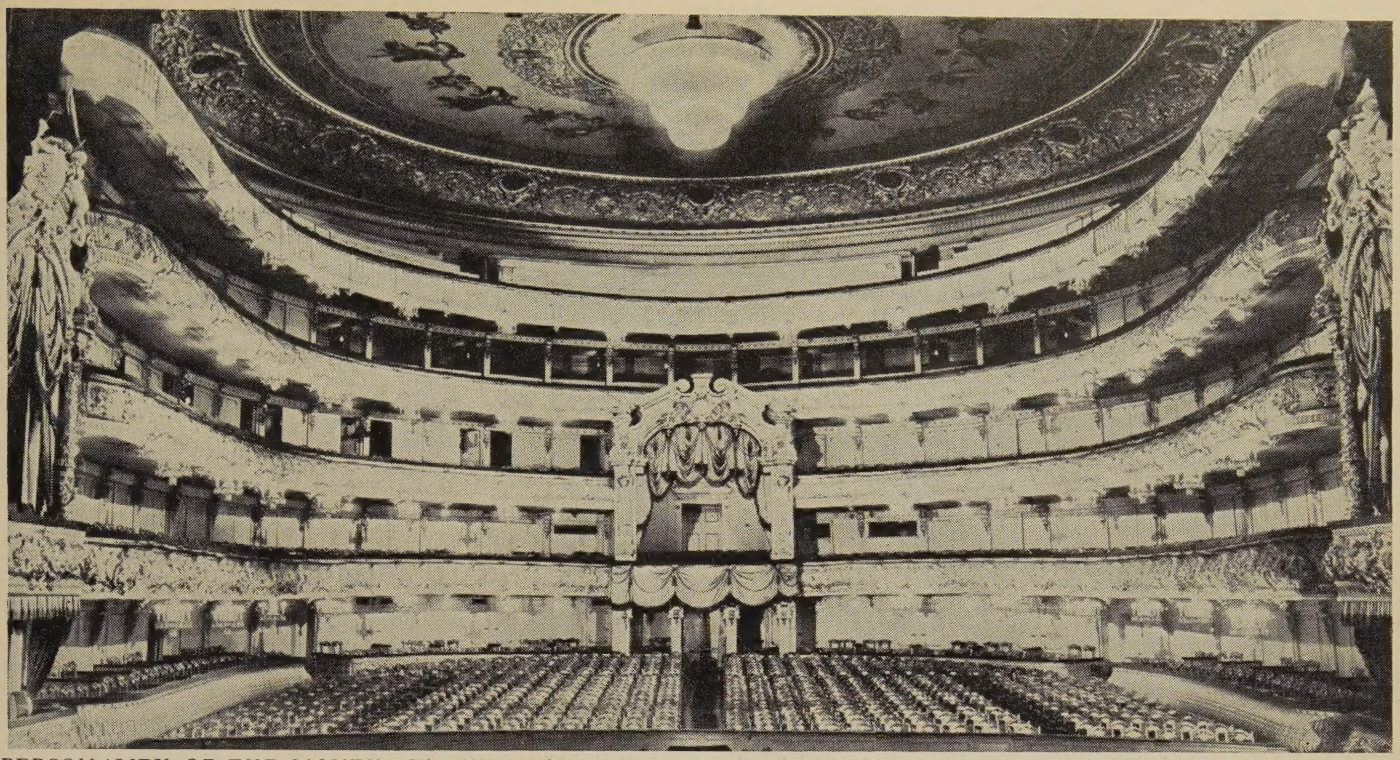

PERSONALITY OF THE MONTH: The Kirov Theatre in Leningrad whose gold, white and peacock blue auditorium will be the first seen in Russia by any British ballet company from the stage. The Royal Ballet opens its Soviet tour there on June 15.

JUNE 1961 12th YEAR OF PUBLICATION Vol. 12 No. 6

Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS *Associate Editor:* CLIVE BARNES
Assistant Editor: E. C. Mason.
WORLD'S LARGEST SALE IN THE FIELD

Occasion of some moment

"BUT you cannot have a theatre as personality of the month" somebody burst out in indignation. Oh, but we can and already we have had Covent Garden, and anyway what theatre in the world is more important to ballet than this one ? There are possibly no names in ballet chatter which crop up so regularly as "Pavlova", "Diaghilev", and "the Kirov" — except that most people when they talk about it cannot get out of the habit of calling it "The Maryinsky" which was what it was called in the days of Imperial Russia, when its influence on the ballet in the West was most profound. Today, with the Soviet inclination to concentrate on Moscow where lies its great Bolshoi Theatre, it is doubtful whether the Russians themselves realise the awe and importance most ballet people in other parts of the world attach to the famous theatre in Leningrad.

Its gold, white and peacock blue auditorium has seen the birth of ballets and the professional birth of dancers who have changed the whole course of ballet history. It has been said that no ballet goes on today that does not owe its existence to the fact that Diaghilev happened. We can go further than that and say that Diaghilev would not have happened had it not been for the fact that the Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg existed. It was Alexandre Benois who drew Diaghilev into the circle which surrounded the Imperial ballet at the Maryinsky and readers of *Dance and Dancers* don't have to be reminded of what happened after that. This same theatre gave birth to the professional life of Pavlova and without her touring of the world, so many things might not have happened that the mind reels. Without this same theatre there would have been no Fokine and where one wonders would choreography have been in this century ? But if we start making lists there would be no end to it — Karsavina, Nijinsky, Spessitzeva, Ulanova, names just go on tumbling out of the brain.

Those who have formed British ballet also owe everything to this theatre's existence and now it's one of them, Ninette de Valois, who is taking her company back to the source. It is right and fitting that the first British company to place toe on Russian stage, should place it on that of the Kirov Theatre in Leningrad. I hope that the Royal Ballet will prove worthy of the occasion which is the most historically important assignment they have yet undertaken.

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Prelude to the Kirov

WHEN the Leningrad State Kirov Ballet opens at Covent Garden on June 19, the British public will be seeing for the first time the company which originally moulded the ballet of this century. Without the Maryinsky Theatre (now Kirov Theatre) in St. Petersburg (now Leningrad) it is doubtful whether ballet would have ever reached the position it now holds in the world today, and would possibly have remained as nothing more than an adjunct to opera performances. The school of the Maryinsky Theatre (so vividly described by one of its greatest ornaments, Tamara Karsavina in her book, Theatre Street) **produced generations of dancers who, in their turn, passed on their great art to the dancers of the rest of the world. Therefore this first visit of this company of 120 dancers means something more than just another visiting company — it's more like seeing a parent for the first time after you have grown up.**

The programmes that the company will show at Covent Garden (for details see "Ballet Dates" on page 38) are to consist of classics such as The Sleeping Beauty, Swan Lake **and** Giselle, **a contemporary work,** The Stone Flower, **and a divertissement programme which will include excerpts from** Taras Bulba, The Nutcracker **and** Shadows **as well as the complete** Chopiniana **(which Fokine later changed to** Les Sylphides **and by which it is generally known throughout the world today).**

Here is a guide to some of the principal dancers who will be seen during the season in London.

Moiseeva

OLGA NIKOLAEVNA MOISEEVA was born in Leningrad in 1928. At the age of nineteen, she graduated from the Leningrad Choreographic School and has worked in the Kirov Theatre since July 1, 1947. She became a member of the Theatre Ballet Group and played a number of important rôles. Her début was made in the rôle of Nikky in the Petipa/Minkus *La Bayadère* and so successful was this that soon she was dancing principal solo and star rôles notably as Florina in *The Sleeping Beauty* and Odette/Odile in *Swan Lake.*

She is a highly emotional artist and her constant aim is towards great simplicity and realistic truth. She is continually searching for new methods of artistic expression and her chief aim is to create a style of interpretation that is particular to herself, to be the first Moiseeva rather than the second anyone else. In recent years her technique and her method of interpretation have been greatly strengthened and it appears that she is gradually moving towards her ultimate goal.

In 1956 her services to ballet were rewarded by the title of Merited Artist of the R.S.F.S.R. being bestowed upon her at the Democratic Festival of Youth in Berlin.

Although the forthcoming season at Covent Garden will be the first time that Moiseeva has been seen in Great Britain, she has already toured quite extensively outside Russia. In 1952 she danced in Berlin; in 1954 in Berlin again and in China; in 1957 in Denmark and in the following year in Finland and Sweden. Last year she made a tour of the United Arab Republic and the Lebanon, and appeared with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet.

Kolpakova

IRINA ALEXANDROVNA KOLPAKOVA was born in Leningrad in 1933 and has been a member of the Kirov company since August 1, 1951.

She is generally considered to be a highly talented classical dancer and since her début with the company has gradually moved to the forefront of the theatre's

KOLPAKOVA: Irina Alexandrovna Kolpakova as Florinda, in the Bluebird pas de deux, *from the third act of* The Sleeping Beauty.

SEMENOV: Vladilen Grigorievitch Semenov as Prince Desiré in The Sleeping Beauty.

MOISEEVA: Olga Nikolaevna Moiseeva as Odette in the second act of Swan Lake.

GRIBOV: Alexander Ivanovitch Gribov as Danila, the hero, in Stone Flower.

principal dancers until today she dances most of the principal star rôles. Her technique is fine and she shows great lyrical quality, moreover she strives to discover and reveal the psychological content in her each and every part. Her dancing is marked by its softness, expressiveness and beauty of form.

Her first starring rôle came in 1955 when she danced the title rôle in the Prokofiev *Cinderella* and this was followed shortly by Princess Aurora in the Tchaikovsky/Petipa *The Sleeping Beauty* and Maria in the Zakharoff/Asafiev *Fountain of Bakhchiserai*. It was in 1957 that she created the principal part of Katherina in the Grigorovitch/Prokofiev *The Stone Flower*, and this was followed two years later by the rôle of Liubima in *The Shore of Hope*. Last year she danced Desdemona in *Othello*. Her rôles in these contemporary ballets have greatly enriched her art. Her particular qualities as a dancer are her clean and pure line and her grace.

In 1957 she received the title of Merited Artist of the R.S.F.S.R. and in 1960 that of People's Artist of the R.S.F.S.R.

Osipenko

ALLA EUGENIEVNA OSIPENKO was born in Leningrad in 1932. At the age of nine she started to study at the Leningrad Choreographic School where she remained for nine years. Even when she was in the junior classes her brilliant potential was noticeable. When she rose to senior classes she studied under possibly Soviet Russia's greatest teacher — Agrippina Vaganova — and was one of her best pupils.

In 1950, Osipenko entered the company of the Kirov Theatre and from the outset her ability and her capacity for hard work made it clear that her progress would be rapid. It was not long before she was dancing important solo parts—her individuality, strong technique and artistic approach made her immediately successful with the audience. She is generally considered to be the best interpreter of the Queen of the Ball rôle in the *Bronze Horse* and of the Lilac Fairy in *Sleeping Beauty* and also the title part in *Giselle*.

In 1954 she first danced Odette/Odile in *Swan Lake* and this marked an important phase in her development for it was seen that she had rapidly matured into an exceptional artist. Her dancing had brilliance, great charm and decided individuality. Her performances are deeply etched in the minds of those who see her owing to her poetry, elegance and also her proud deportment.

She also appears with great success in the contemporary rôles — as Mistress of the Copper Mountain in *Stone Flower*, as Liubima in *Shore of Hope* and as Desdemona in *Othello*.

Osipenko has toured extensively and received many honours including the honorary title of Merited Artist of the R.S.F.S.R. in 1957, and last year she was made People's Artist of the R.S.F.S.R.

Gribov

ALEXANDER IVANOVITCH GRIBOV was born in Leningrad in 1934. He graduated at the Leningrad Choreographic School and has been a member of the Kirov Theatre ballet since he was nineteen.

His qualities were so obvious from an early age that he was immediately taken into the company upon graduation. Standing clearly out among his age group, he was soon being given solo rôles in the major ballets.

Shortly after his graduation, in August 1953, he took part in a tour of the 4th World Festival of Democratic Youth in Bucharest and his group was awarded the first prize.

It was as Ostap in the Lopokov/Soloviev-Sedoy *Taras Bulba* in 1955 that he made

his début in an important part — he easily overcame the complications of this difficult virtuoso rôle as well as acting it with extreme conviction.

From that moment on, his rise was rapid and in 1957 he was given the part of Danila in *Stone Flower* in which he was so successful that he has become the rôle's chief interpreter. In 1959 he created the part of the Fisherman in the patriotic ballet, *The Shore of Hope.*

Grindin

ANATOLY VASILIEVITCH GRINDIN was born in Novosibirsk in 1929. He graduated from the Leningrad Choreographic School in 1952 and became a member of the Ballet Theatre Group. It was clear from the start that Grindin had the potential of becoming a remarkably fine character dancer and actor and these hopes were soon realised owing to his capacity for hard work in perfecting his mastery.

Soon he was taking over many solo rôles and was particularly successful in the Spanish Dance from the third act of *Swan Lake,* as one of four male dancers in the *Valse des Fleurs* from *The Nutcracker* and in the Fandango from the Petipa/Minkus *Don Quixote.* He also proved to be highly successful in contemporary Soviet ballets and became one of the principal dancers to play the part of Koumich in the ballet, *Native Fields.*

More recently, one of his most important interpretations has been that of Severyan in the Grigoriovitch/Prokofiev *Stone Flower* as well as the African from *Spartak* and in solo parts from *The Shore of Hope.* In a series of choreographic miniatures produced by Jacobson, Grindin has also achieved great success.

He has toured extensively outside Russia — in 1958 he toured with the Kirov Theatre Ballet in Roumania, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, in 1959 in the United Arab Republic and the Lebanon and in 1960 in Japan.

Semenov

VLADILEN GRIGORIEVITCH SEMENOV has been a member of the Kirov Theatre Ballet since 1950. His good physique, fine classical technique and acting capabilities soon singled him out. Starting with small solo rôles he was soon given leading parts in both classical and contemporary ballets and he now appears in nearly all the ballets in the Kirov repertory.

In 1955, he took over the very difficult rôle of Romeo in the Prokofiev *Romeo and Juliet* and this performance proved his ascending mastery of major parts. Since then he has been successful in Prince Desiré and in the Bluebird *pas de deux* from *The Sleeping Beauty,* as Prince Siegfried in *Swan Lake,* as the Prince in *The Nutcracker,* as Eugenii in *The Bronze Horse* and in many other rôles. His highly polished performances are very sensitive and a softness of movement is one of his particular characteristics.

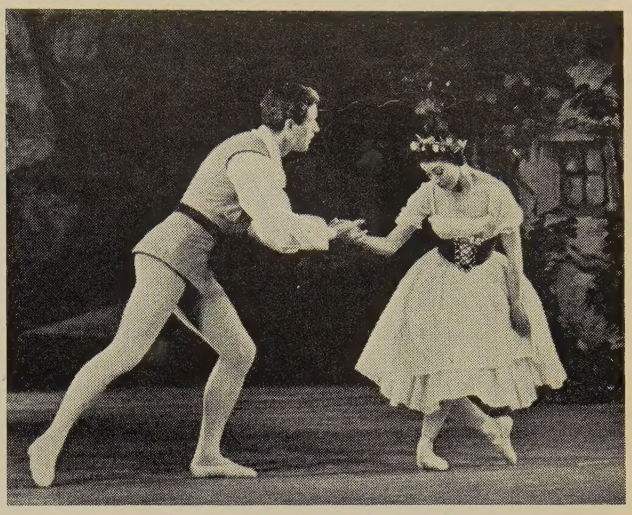
He also has made a number of tours with his company and with concert groups outside Russia — in 1954 in Paris and Berlin; in 1955 and 1957 in Poland; in 1958 in Finland, Roumania, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Czechoslovakia; in 1959 in Latin America, and Bulgaria, in 1960 in the United Arab Republic, the Lebanon and in Japan.

OSIPENKO (top left): Alla Eugenievitch Osipenko as Odette in Swan Lake.
GRINDIN (below left): Anatoly Vasilievitch Grindin in the rôle of Severyan, the villainous bailiff, from Stone Flower.

THE ROYAL BALLET DOES A DOUBLE-TAKE AT *Giselle*

NEW YORK was the first to see the Royal Ballet's revised production of Giselle when it was given at the Metropolitan Opera House on September 30, 1960. The choreography of Jean Coralli and Jules Perrot, revised by Nicholai Sergueeff has been supervised with additional choreography by Frederick Ashton in collaboration with Tamara Karsavina. Music by Adolphe Adam. Designed by James Bailey. The new production was first given in London, at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, on April 4, 1961.

Photographed by HOUSTON ROGERS



SHY COURTSHIP: Margot Fonteyn, as Giselle, and Michael Somes, as Albrecht, in an early moment from the first act.

PRODUCTION AND CHOREOGRAPHY

ONCE, many years ago, a Peter Arno cartoon appeared in *The New Yorker,* showing a harrassed but quite implacable man walking away from the still-smoking wreckage of what had been an aeroplane. The caption read: "O well, back to the drawing-board." After the first night of the new production of *Giselle* at Covent Garden, I think I know just how that man felt.

For years the Royal Ballet has possessed a hopelessly inadequate *Giselle.* To be sure improvements have sometimes been made here and there — after all it is not so long since the production still committed that classic solecism of having Wilfred lead on the hunting party right up to Giselle's cottage — but by and large the production was a mess. And, sad to say, by and large it still is. What made the unveiling of this *Giselle* a particularly disappointing occasion was that when it had its out-of-town opening in New York, the American critics were notably enthusiastic.

Of course, the new production, which has been supervised by Tamara Karsavina and Frederick Ashton, is an improvement on the old. It would have been nothing short of incredible if this were not so, but such improvements as have been made are those in the general detailing of the production and not in its overall conception. Even here — and this is the most dispiriting thing of all — when so much care has been lavished on the production, dramatic illogicalities still abound.

Let me show what I mean, by first looking at the production in some detail. The first act, it will be recalled, is set in a small village in Thuringia, wherever that may be. The scene shows two cottages, one where Giselle lives with her mother and the other occupied by Albrecht, a vile seducer who is courting her under the assumed identity of Loys, a villager.

Albrecht comes out of his cottage to pay a visit on Giselle, who lives, mark you, across the street. Being a prudent man he puts on his cloak and sword for the journey, which is all of twenty feet. Now perhaps the weather is slightly unpredictable, so let us allow that he thinks it's better to be safe than sorry. But why should he put on the cloak and sword of a nobleman when he is meant to be masquerading as Loys? Well, let us allow that he is stupid (we all make mistakes), but he is not so stupid that he doesn't realise that although he has just come out of his cottage wearing his cloak, he has still got to get rid of it immediately. It just so happens that he has brought his squire, Wilfred, with him on the trip. Now Wilfred

CROWNING RESTORED: Giselle crowned Queen of the Vintage, an incident from the first act which was used in the original production, as can be seen from contemporary lithographs, and in Britain by Ballet Rambert more recently. This is the first time that the Royal Ballet has used this moment properly.

THE GIRLS DANCE: Margot Fonteyn surrounded by the girls of the village in the ensemble *from Act 1.*

happens to be in full court dress (which Albrecht realises could be incriminating), so not only does he have to get rid of that damned cloak and infernal sword, he also has to get rid of Wilfred. Quick as a flash, he solves all his problems. He hands the cloak and the sword to the ever-helpful Wilfred, who promptly takes them back into the cottage from whence they have just come. (Incidentally, this tiny, squalid cottage must have a back entrance, for while we see young Wilfred going in, we never see young Wilfred coming out, although he walks on as large as life later in the ballet.)

Now this scene is, I think, absurd. And if the producers want to know how it can be improved, I suggest they watch how Ronald Hynd handles the situation when he plays Albrecht in their own production. He walks on from behind Giselle's cottage. This explains why he is wearing cloak and sword, why that cloak is not a peasant's and why it has to be hidden.

Albrecht finally gets to Giselle and after a lot of coy bantering (which I personally think is out of character, and in any event is too corny) they reach the famous "he loves me, he loves me not" flower-picking routine. Giselle takes a flower, which to judge from the number of petals must be a chrysanthemum, a somewhat cultivated bloom to find in those parts at that time of the century, but we will let that pass. She takes the multi-petalled flower and with much wagging and shaking of her head, attacks it with all the vigour of an old woman plucking a chicken. Having stripped half the flower in an apparently haphazard fashion (sometimes she tears off one, sometimes two, sometimes three petals — who cares, it's Christmas !) she then swoons off into deep tragedy and sinks to the ground with an almost audible sigh of "You don't love me, you cad!"

Now why Giselle should do that when she hadn't even completed the test is just anybody's guess. (I suspect she's mad, and subsequent events do nothing to disprove it.) But Albrecht, who is nobody's fool underneath that jerkin, is equal to the contingency. He picks up the same flower and with a metaphorical but heavy wink at the audience ("Fasten your safety belts, production point coming up"), he casually whips off a few petals on his own account, goes over to Giselle, still prostrated with grief, and then in her presence pulls off more of the unfortunate flower, and very nearly (but never I think quite) gets to the end of the petals before throwing the remainder away with a gesture of wild happiness.

Of course it's a pretty mean thing to dwell at such length on the way the Royal Ballet handles a mere flower. But why not have *two* flowers of, say, the simple marigold variety. Giselle has her go first, and it comes out "He loves me not". She pretends, the way lovers do, to be distraught (it's only a game, I tell you), and Albrecht picks *another* flower, glances at it, surreptitiously tears off *one* petal, takes it over to Giselle and demonstrates the result he wants. If the incident is worth putting in the ballet at all (and obviously it is) it is worth putting in without botching. Indeed, if a ballet is worth producing, it is worth producing badly — but not this badly.

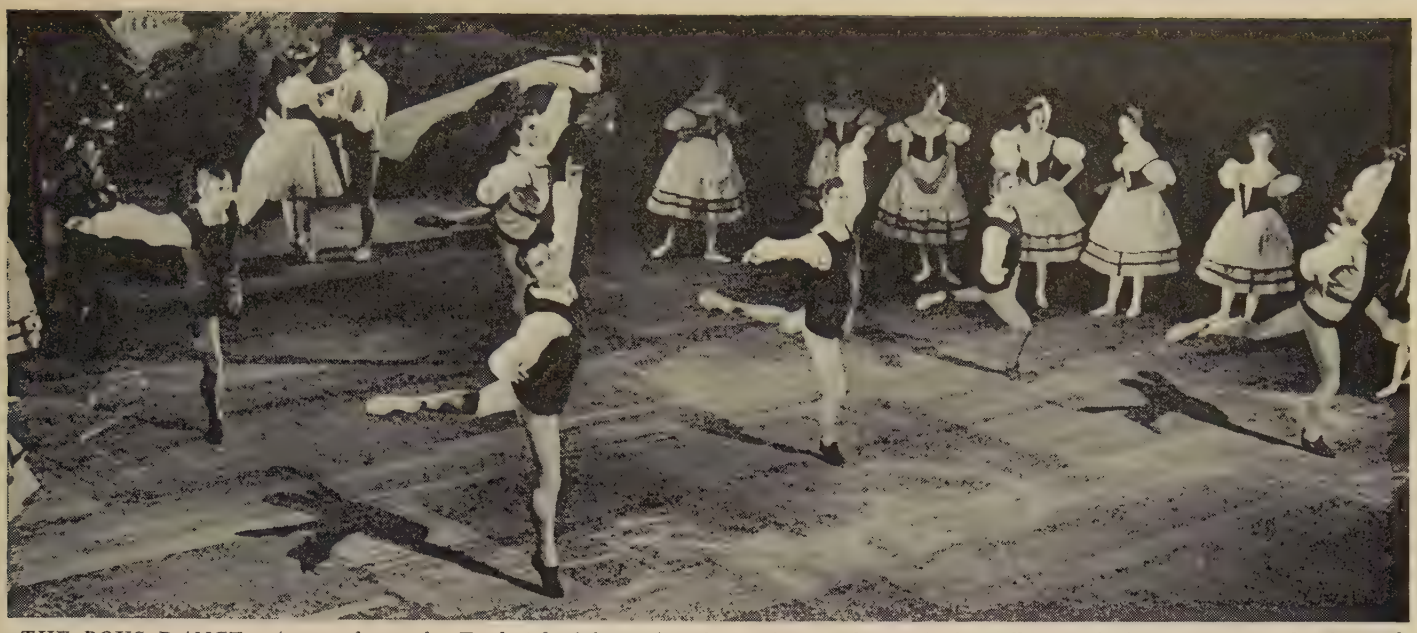
It would be possible to go on through the ballet dealing with the whole production in this way, but I have not space enough nor time. Even so a few points, almost random examples, must be cited. When Hilarion breaks into Albrecht's cottage, he finds the door open. This being so, anyone could have planted the cloak and sword in there, and it seems surprising that Albrecht does not use this as an alibi. The sensible procedure would surely be for Hilarion to force his entry with his hunting knife. When the Duke hands his horn over to his squire, the squire promptly goes over to the cottage and without any more ado hangs it up, as if *he knows the hook is there.* In the Bolshoi production, the squire, having been given the hunting horn, looked at it with disdain, at a loss to know what to do with it, then, struck by a sudden thought, walked over to the cottage, felt around to see if there should be a suitable nail to hang it on, found one and hung up the encumbrance with a sigh of relief.

In the second act, Hilarion is given a shabby little death scene. In the first place there is no attempt made, as there is in the Bolshoi version, to make Hilarion's fate a forerunner of what is in store for the hapless Albrecht. In the second place, Hilarion is just allowed to reel off-stage unconvincingly. The relationship between Giselle and Albrecht in this act is also not nearly so convincing as it might have been. For example, when Giselle indicates the safety of the cross to Albrecht, Dolin always used to start running towards it, then return for Giselle. No such subtlety is revealed here, where Albrecht just bolts, and Myrthe takes the hindmost.

So far I have been talking about things in the Royal Ballet's production that have not been changed. But there are sins of commission as well as omission, and not all of the many changes that have been introduced have been for the better. Possibly the changes are best considered under three headings: changes in the general production; changes in the mime; and changes in the choreography.

Many small points have been amplified, often advantageously. It would be impossible to list them all, but as an example note the way that in his first dispute with Hilarion, Albrecht now reaches for his non-existent sword, thus giving the gamekeeper the first hint of his adversary's nobility. The point is made rather heavy-handedly, yet it is possibly a point worth making, even if it means a great deal more to people who know the subsequent action of the ballet than to people who don't. A far less happy touch comes with Hilarion's first entrance, when to show his love for Giselle, he somewhat self-consciously places "kisses" on the ground outside the door of her cottage. This is presumably meant to be a substitute for the Bolshoi touch, whereby Hilarion puts a brace of pheasants on her doorstep, and a pretty poor substitute it is.

Changes of rather more complexity have also been made. The Hunting Party (incidentally, there is still very little done to indicate that they are in fact hunting, and it might be an idea for them to carry the odd dead stag, or if they couldn't run to a stag, at least one or two rabbits!) is now treated in a new manner. Bathilde, on her first entry, mimes that she is feeling faint, the so-called "peasant" *pas de deux* is no longer presented as a *divertissement* for the Hunting Party's entertainment, and Bathilde and the Duke stay on to witness the scene of Giselle's madness, only leaving at her final collapse. We are also now



THE BOYS DANCE: A new dance, by Frederick Ashton, for the male members of the village, which comes towards the end of Act 1.

given a tableau showing Giselle being crowned Queen of the Vintage.

In the second act Hilarion enters with a group of rather subdued villagers and regales them with the story of the Wili legend. This, like the new ending, is a modified version of the original Gautier scenario, as printed in Cyril Beaumont's *The Ballet Called Giselle.* This new ending, which curiously enough has not yet found its way into Covent Garden's programme note, has Bathilde trekking through the midnight glades just in time for a dawn reconciliation with Albrecht. For me it was more the production's *coup de grâce* than the ballet's ending, but more of that later.

The mime has been extended — almost to breaking point. The Royal Ballet should really consider giving lessons in mime not only to its dancers (although these, of course, would always be welcome) but also to its audience. This curious semaphoring the company indulges in obviously must mean something, yet frequently I am at a loss to know precisely what, and I see these ballets more perhaps than most people. The new production now features a rather less convincing version of the long mime scene for Berthe, which Wanda Evina used to do for the old International Ballet. This interpolation (taken in part from the original scenario, but presumably based on Petipa's 1877 version of the ballet at the Maryinsky) needlessly holds up the action, but could possibly be justified were it to be performed by Madame Karsavina herself. At present it leaves something to be desired, and I have yet to find a member of the audience who really understood it. It often strikes me as odd that the Russians and the Danes (both with long ballet traditions, and frequently thought of as the best of ballet actors) never use the stilted Maryinsky style of mime we guard as zealously as a parvenu in the Southern States of America hoarding worthless Confederate banknotes to prove his non-existent lineage.

Presumably the mime came under the supervision of Madame Karsavina, whereas the choreographic changes were clearly the responsibility of Frederick Ashton. These are much more sweeping than may appear at first glance. Perhaps most notable of the additions is the new variation Ashton has inserted in the Peasant *pas de deux.* By taking out the existing dance, choreographed like the rest of the *pas de deux* to Bergmüller music, Ashton has created a new dance, in something of the Bournonville manner, to music once used (before Petipa) for Giselle's first act variation. It is pretty music, and this is a charming dance, yet I cannot feel that either music or choreography sit very happily within the framework of the existing *pas de deux.*

The amount of dancing allotted to Albrecht in the first act has been slightly increased, and six peasant boys have been given a couple of bouncy dance entrances, which is doubtless good for their morale, as well as adding somewhat to the choreographic interest of the *ensemble,* who are now, more than ever, dressed with the

ADMIRATION: Giselle (Fonteyn) surreptitiously touches the rich fabric of Bathilde's dress while watched by her mother (Gerd Larsen) and the Duke (Derek Rencher).

MADNESS: Giselle (Fonteyn) goes mad when she realises that she has been deceived. Her mother (Larsen) tries to comfort her, and her former admirer, Hilarion (Leslie Edwards), who was responsible for the disclosure, looks on apprehensively.

natty uniformity of a musical comedy chorus. (In theory the introduction of dancing male peasants is an improvement, in practice they are made to hold back from the fray until such a late hour in the proceedings that when they do start to dance, the effect is rather disconcerting, as if one of the linesmen in a football match, bored with his lot, had suddenly picked up the ball and started to run down the wing.)

Smaller choreographic changes have been made to the length and accent of many of the *ensemble* dances; thus sequential movements have been introduced into the first act dances (at least I had never noticed them before, and having noticed them they strike me as anachronistic, as does quite a lot of the new choreography), and "sylphides" groupings now appear in the second act. Giselle's second act variation has been extended, Albrecht and Giselle now perform some very charming lifts, by which Giselle is placed down in *arabesque,* and the famous Bolshoi "crossings" of the *corps* lines in *arabesque* has also been introduced.

On the first night of the new production in England, a friend came up to me in the interval, and having asked me what I thought of this new *Giselle,* replied, "The trouble is, you are prejudiced. All you want to see is a reproduction of the Bolshoi *Giselle,* which would be quite unsuitable for our dancers, who have to work out their problems for themselves." There is, I admit, a lot of force in this argument. I am prejudiced on this score, and I do think that the only sensible course for the Royal Ballet to take would be to invite Lavrovsky to stage his version of *Giselle,* lock, stock and barrel. It is possible that someone else could produce as good, or even better, a production than the Lavrovsky, but until I see it with my own eyes, I take leave to doubt it. As for the Bolshoi *Giselle* not being "suitable" for our dancers, I have never heard such bosh. Given a production they could really believe in, they could and would give a stunning performance.

In any event, this present production has been greatly influenced by the Lavrovsky, which of course Fonteyn and Somes actually danced in when they appeared as guest artists with the Finnish National Ballet. Unfortunately while the new *Giselle* aims at many of the same effects as the Bolshoi production, it fails, for the very good reason that it has not adopted any credible or convincing attitude towards the principal characters.

Where Lavrovsky triumphed, was in his understanding of the basic dramatic situation, and his comprehension that the action turned not round Giselle, but Albrecht. This, if you like, was a revolutionary approach to the ballet, and its effect was to give the work a force and immediacy it had not possessed, probably for the best part of a century.

Lavrovsky, who incidentally changed far less of the original Petipa version of the choreography (as reproduced in England by Sergueeff) than does the present revival, conceived the whole action as a Pushkin-like drama of regeneration. Thoughtlessness was the key to the action; the selfish thoughtlessness of a fickle, empty-headed aristocrat (Albrecht) and the bovine thoughtfulness of the stalwart, faithful peasant (Hilarion). In the first act these two characters were counter-poised, with Giselle between them. Hilarion is depicted entirely sympathetically, while Albrecht is the complete cad. This contrast is highlighted in innumerable ways, such as by having Hilarion, not Albrecht (or Berthe as in the original text), grab the sword from the suicidal Giselle, and the revulsion of the villagers when, at the end, Albrecht runs towards them for sympathy. In this first act, Giselle is the mouse in the trap, predestined, drawn there by her character and her situation.

In the second act, Lavrovsky shows the regeneration of Albrecht. Giselle's madness and death have shaken him from adolescent philandering into a sort of posthumous love for the girl he has betrayed. Now, the vision of Giselle reveals to him the full power of love, and at the end of the ballet Albrecht stands alone, an adult, responsible human being, transfigured by his experience, enriched by the understanding of human dignity and sacrifice. This is a noble, poetic conception: here is the literalism of Socialist art at its infrequent best.

At this level, there is nothing in the Royal Ballet production worthy of criticism. The contrast between the Bolshoi ending, and the cheaply sentimental, mass-circulation women's serial ending misguidedly taken from Gautier (but subtly changed for all that), is, with all respect, a chasm as wide as that separating Shakespeare from doggerel.

Perhaps in writing about the Royal Ballet's *Giselle* I have been occasionally flippant. I assure you I do not feel flippant about it, for this seems to me to be a failure of the greatest magnitude. A failure not so much of a ballet — this would be comparatively unimportant — but, if I am correct in my assessment, a failure to treat ballet, the art itself, as seriously as it deserves.

Very great efforts have been put into this new version, and this everyone must respect and admire, and in fact it would not take so very much to bridge this gap, so vast in terms of comprehension, yet so narrow in terms of actual physical production. It could be done, and I urge the Royal Ballet to think again.

DANCING

OH DEAR! Not only am I in a minority over my assessment of the new production, which was generally well received, but I am also in a minority over Margot Fonteyn's interpretation of Giselle, which was generally acclaimed.

Recently it has been suggested in one section of the ballet press that critics not only enjoy drawing attention to themselves by attacking "established favourites", but are actually spurred on to such a task by their news-hungry editors. This is far from the truth, for there are very few people perverted enough to enjoy swimming against the current of public opinion just for its own sake. On the other hand I cannot envisage an honest critic whose opinions are so flexible that they will always concur with either the general or popular assessment of each and every ballet and dancer. Consequently there are bound to come occasions when the critic has to tell the truth as he quite subjectively sees it, even if this involves denigrating a great artist. All he can do is to say, in effect,

"this is my opinion for what it is worth, you may not think it is worth much, but at least it's my own". After all, even critics have to live with themselves.

In addition to all the technical prerequisites, and that particular degree of know-how we usually call artistry, the great artist in ballet perhaps has two very special qualities. The first is the unusual power of projection of his personality, while the second is the ability to involve himself with the character he is playing. The first of these qualities will naturally always be present, always at the beck and call of the audience, giving it that thrill of recognition, enhanced, but not I think provided, by the public reputation of the artist in question. The second, that sense of involvement, is not always present, and when it is, the total performance is a great one.

Fonteyn, with her flashing smile searchlighting out over the auditorium, has never, to my mind, succeeded in subjugating the ballerina to the peasant-girl, Giselle. Her acting seems like a contrived mask, carefully thought out yet somehow lacking in warmth and humanity. It is, I think, this conception of involvement that is missing. Her dancing has a brittle elegance, but little Romantic charm, and despite the carefully calculated fears, the momentary presages of tragedy that are occasionally made to cloud her face, I still find myself thinking this is more a Swanilda than a Giselle. Her mad scene is a masterpiece of artifice that leaves me stonily unmoved, and in the second act her exquisite dancing, for all its marvellously individual quality, never spells out love, and seems to keep within a tightly classical framework rather than whirling into the Romantic rhapsodic dancing I personally hope for in a Giselle. Most people disagree with my assessment of Fonteyn's Giselle, and obviously my failure to appreciate it is my loss.

Up until this season I have always held Michael Somes's Albrecht in high regard, but the first night did not show him to best advantage. His dancing was wooden and strained, and this seemed to affect his whole performance. His bearing and manner looked splendid, while his acting showed a shrewd intelligence. He missed the point of his fatal attraction towards the wili-Giselle, which lures him from the safety of the cross, but this is in any case so underscored in the production as to be almost unnoticeable. And he very reasonably looked aghast when Giselle picked up some of the lilies he had just placed on her grave and ungratefully returned them to him. Of the new ending he probably made the best of an unbelievably clumsy job, but this was not, for the time being at any rate, the firm and convincing Albrecht of yesteryear.

Despite the obviously considerable merits of Fonteyn and Somes (the bigness of their personalities, the sympathy of the partnership, and the sheer beauty of her dancing), I preferred all three of the other Royal Ballet duos to appear in the work so far this season.

Nadia Nerina and David Blair did not yet seem well adjusted to the new production, and both have given better performances in the old version. These characterisations are sincere and workmanlike, they also show, to a greater extent than anyone in the Royal Ballet, the influence of the Bolshoi production. Nerina would, in fact, appear to model herself upon Ulanova; sensibly because physically the two dancers have much in common. Although this was a slightly substandard performance from the two of them, their dancing had many superlatively exciting moments. In the second act particularly, Nerina achieved a fine air of wind-swept Romanticism, and Blair's partnering and robust dancing proved exemplary. However, I strongly disliked Blair's practice of turning towards the audience in preparation for his diagonal of *double tours en l'air*. Unless these are done in the direction of the diagonal, the dramatic thread of the variation is broken.

The next pair, Svetlana Beriosova and Donald MacLeary, excelled themselves. The essence of Beriosova's Giselle is in its sweet good-nature, and the consequent cruelty of her deception makes the tragic pathos of her mad scene particularly affecting. Mr. Beaumont has noted somewhere his recollection that Pavlova actually danced the mad scene rather than mimed it, a practice I would draw to the attention of our contemporary Giselles. Certainly Beriosova, more than most, invests her acting here with a very definite dance quality, and it is, I think, greatly to its advantage. In the second act Beriosova assumes an air of elegiac tenderness and she has, in both senses, a grave look about her. Her dancing had a bold, clear outline, particularly impressive in its statuesque *ports de bras*. She also, most importantly, had an identification with the part, which I had not previously felt in her always rewarding portrayal.

MacLeary's Albrecht turned out to be the best evidence he has yet provided of

WHERE WILIS REIGN: Anya Linden as Myrthe, Queen of the Wilis, surrounded by the subjects whom she dominates, in the beginning of Act 2.

the full extent of his potential. His dancing was stronger, his acting clearer and more emphatic than ever before. I like the way he identified the necklace Bathilde gives to Giselle, I like even more his youthful ardour, and his uninhibited projection of a Romantic hero. This is still a conventional Albrecht, but a very good conventional Albrecht, and, almost needless to say, his partnering had a rare distinction.

It may be that in *Giselle* Beriosova and MacLeary have their best classic rôles, and there is no doubt whatsoever that Annette Page and Ronald Hynd find their best form in this ballet. This pair seems to choose a "period" conception of the ballet (in the perfectly valid tradition of the Rambert production rather than the Bolshoi) and give finely convincing characterisations. Page is all fleeting lithograph, and her very delicate, sharply accented technique is shown up well by the choreography. Hynd's greatest virtue is his commanding presence, which together with his vigorously intelligent acting gives his performance a compelling interest. His dancing is extremely masculine, but not quite so elegant as his unabashed manner might lead one to believe, while his partnering is completely adequate without being at all spectacular.

Where these two score heavily is in their unusually sympathetic musicality — they really do move as one and their interplaying is always attractive to watch — and the intelligently critical approach they bring to the rôles. I have already noted how Hynd knocks sense into his opening scene by making his entrance from behind Giselle's cottage, a point that should, indeed must, be incorporated into the general production. But their handling of many of the other scenes is equally as sensitive and inventive. For example, when Berthe is relating her long monologue of the Wilis, Page is suitably impressed, but Hynd looks very slightly amused in just the supercilious way one would expect from a nobleman listening to an old wives' tale. Page was the only one of the first four Giselles to throw her flower away right at the apex of her jump during her first *pas de deux* during the second act. They also conveyed something of the agony of Albrecht being pulled towards Giselle, while Myrthe forces her to dance as a bait for her victim, and they even managed to imply something of the resignation of the ballet's ending. All in all, while Beriosova and MacLeary had the edge on them for dancing, this pair put up the best struggle against the unequal odds of the production.

The new production produced three Queens of the Wilis — Anya Linden, Christine Beckley and Deanne Bergsma. All three danced well. Linden seemed an iceberg of detachment, frozen, treacherous and heartless. There was a more malevolent edge to Beckley's Queen, a certain fierceness which contrasted with Linden's disdainful chastity. Bergsma with her sweeping, split-like jump had moments when she flittered across the stage like a great white bird of vengeance. She did not, however, have anything like enough authority, and her whole characterisation proved too much like the Lilac Fairy for the comfort of anyone but Albrecht. Nevertheless, with careful production, and perhaps a few wise words from the ballet master, Bergsma could be developed into an outstandingly successful Myrthe. I felt that all three girls needed more careful producing, and I would also like to see the introduction of the wand of rosemary that breaks off when the lovers find the sanctuary of the Cross. This was always one of the apter production points of Dolin's version.

The Royal Ballet presumably consider that the rôle of Hilarion has been strengthened, and he is certainly given a great deal more time to underscore his heavy-handed mime. However, whether all these entrances and exits, each coming pat on cue like the farcically contrived exits and entrances of a melodrama, really assist him to portray a rounded character, I personally doubt. Leslie Edwards seemed, if anything, rather less successful than before, for he tended to give his mime a ranting, over-emphasised air. On the other hand it remained a good Hilarion, that one would be interested to see in a more coherent production. Franklin White's interpretation of Hilarion is both less rough and more sentimental than Edwards's. There is a streak of self-pity here, which while perfectly valid might be thought to detract from the balance of the ballet, because he does not provide Albrecht with such a formidable adversary.

The Peasant *pas de deux* has been given by an assortment of couples during the season, and it is a fault of the production that they all have to come on and do their piece in the manner of guest artists — there is no attempt to merge them in with the villagers. Of the four girls who have so far been seen in the *pas de deux*, Maryon Lane seemed to be dancing marginally below her best on the first night. Her feet were not quite so accurate and neat as one would have expected, although her dancing had, as ever, an appealing piquancy. When her turn came Annette Page was also not quite at her best, and she gave the new Ashton variation a certain, uncalled-for spikiness, although her Romantic manner remained charmingly in period. The best performances, I thought, came from Merle Park and Antoinette Sibley. Park gave the part an assured fluency and musicality, but it was really left to Sibley to sweep the board with a sweetly persuasive performance, particularly of Ashton's new variation. Perhaps irrelevantly I found myself wishing the Royal Ballet would mount Bournonville's full-length *Napoli* for her, or short of that lend her to Marie Rambert for some guest appearances in *La Sylphide*.

Brian Shaw gave his usual sterling performance of the male rôle, and Graham Usher continues to improve in the same part. At the moment Usher's variations are not completely consistent, and it almost seems as if a sudden lapse of concentration causes a momentary loss of grip on the choreography. This was equally true of Shaw, at a similar age. Usher's partnering

ORDER TO DOOM : Hilarion has been sent to a watery grave, Myrthe (Linden) tries to force Albrecht (Somes) to follow the same fate.

FADING POWER: Myrthe (Linden, right) tries to get Albrecht (Somes) into her power, but having sought the power of the cross, Myrthe's power is less potent over him or Giselle (Fonteyn).

is exceptionally good, and it is noticeable how even the Royal Ballet's *demi-caractère* dancers are now expected to partner with the same ease and strength as the *danseurs nobles*. John Sale, by far the least experienced of the trio, produced partnering of a somewhat hit or miss variety, with one notable miss. This looked to be the result of nerves, and with more opportunities would doubtless disappear. His dancing had an attractive *brio* and he seems a dancer well worth encouraging. (By way of an aside, it seems a pity that the Royal Ballet is not currently giving the same amount of chances to its young male dancers as it does to its girls. At least at matinées the solo male rôles could perhaps be more widely distributed; it would help the company and stop a growing discontent among the younger male dancers.)

Outstanding among the mime rôles was Derek Rencher's extravagantly rumbustuous Duke of Courland, an unusually good piece of character study. Vyvyan Lorrayne made a delicate, pale-faced Bathilde with a warmhearted gentleness that was believable, and a trace of gentility that was not. This Bathilde is too little of the aristocrat, yet it is a portrayal of some promise. So far as acting goes Pamela May, who mimed the old version without the fainting episode, proved excellent, but she is, with all kindness, no longer of a generation where she can play a young girl with comfort.

I liked Gerd Larsen's rosy-cheeked Berthe, and although she was not perhaps completely convincing in her solo monologue — which incidentally breaks up the flow of the ballet most disconcertingly — I cannot for the life of me think of anyone in British ballet who could do it better, although I am sure Pamela May might do it equally well. However, why the Royal Ballet does not persuade by hook, crook or court order, if need be, Tamara Karsavina herself to perform this rôle, is past understanding. I may be an opponent of Maryinsky mime, but not when it is performed by a Maryinsky ballerina!

The *corps de ballet* danced moderately well, and acted agreeably enough in what might be called pockets of resistance. How interesting it might be to see someone like Zeffirelli produce the *corps de ballet* in this. The various Zulmes and Moynas were smoothly danced by Vyvyan Lorrayne, Georgina Parkinson, Christine Beckley and, particularly, Monica Mason.

Clive Barnes.

MUSIC

CHANGES in the music are a major feature of the Royal Ballet's revised *Giselle*, and not before time. Almost anything done to strengthen and straighten out the old version prepared for Sadler's Wells would be an improvement. Nobody now remembers who orchestrated the greater part of that, but Robert Irving and Gordon Jacob both contributed to it. The revised score is still something of a hotch-potch, but it takes several steps in the right direction.

Broadly speaking it goes back to the original sequence of the 1841 score, restoring some passages like those for Berthe and Hilarion, eliminating a number of cuts and making others. It retains the additions from Bergmüller in most of the peasant *pas de deux*, and those from an unknown hand (generally thought to be Drigo or Minkus) in Giselle's *variations* in each act. One other major change is the substitution of Adam's music from a Giselle-Albrecht *pas de deux* for the Peasant Girl's first solo in place of Bergmüller. Altogether about 10 minutes of extra music has been added to the ballet.

Through the courtesy of John Lanchbery I have examined the score of the revised version and list below the new musical sequence, with comments on its features and details of all cuts. The list of cuts and alterations in the *old* Covent Garden version are given by Roger Fiske in the chapter on *Giselle* in his book, *Ballet Music* (Harrap, 1958), where readers will also find an excellent musical analysis of the ballet as a whole.

Adolphe Adam's original music for *Giselle* has had a complex history since the ballet's successful Paris première in 1841. He already had five ballets and a dozen comic operas to his credit then. Several more light operas followed, but only *Giselle* has survived in modern performance. "I enjoyed composing the music of *Giselle*," wrote Adam. "I was in a hurry and that always stimulates my imagination. Also, I was on good terms with Perrot and Carlotta (Grisi), and the work took shape, as it were, in my own drawing-room."

The music was a cut above the general level of ballet scores at the time. Conceived in the *cantilena* style of Italian opera (Bellini and Donizetti), it reflected a serious attempt to make the choreography and musical expression dependent on one another. Although it is apt to sound occasionally insipid to our ears, especially when played on the piano, it is a score well calculated for theatrical effect in actual performance. Adam was a skilled and inventive craftsman, and *Giselle* has a number of original features.

One of them is the use of *leitmotiv*, by which a particular turn of phrase or melody is associated with a certain character, situation or expression of feeling. Another is an early use of musical reminiscence for dramatic effect. These are primitive and not always consistent, but they foreshadow an entire idiom of 19th-century narrative music which Wagner carried to its ultimate development. Contrary to some statements, however, *Giselle* is not the *first* ballet to use *leitmotiv*. In the courts of musical research in Paris, Lanchbery recently found the method employed in *Manon Lescaut*, a ballet score by Halévy dated 1830, 11 years before *Giselle*.

During the later 19th-century *Giselle* flourished in the Maryinsky repertoire at St. Petersburg (where Petipa staged four productions between 1860 and 1899. It seems likely that the practice of making substantial cuts dates from this period, and it is known that for the 1887 revival there Minkus composed some additional music for the benefit of Emma Bessonne. Unfortunately no documentary evidence exists to show whether or not this is the same as the additional *Giselle* variations now incorporated into the score and described as "importées des Ballets Russes" in Henri Busser's version published in 1924, which consolidated the score then in use at the Paris Opéra.

Adam's original *orchestral* score had meanwhile disappeared. All that survived was the piano arrangement published in 1841 by Meissonier and later reprinted in Paris from the same plates by H. le Boulch. It is this which forms the basis of the new

version at Covent Garden. The orchestral score and parts came to light in America a short while ago, however, and furnished the Royal Ballet with a slice of original old Adam when it was found that the made-up revised score taken to New York lacked the passage after Berthe's mime scene up to the Court entry. This was hastily filled in from Adam's own orchestration on the spot. The rest of the current Covent Garden version uses the old scoring, revised and extended (in the additional passages) by Lanchbery and Richard Temple Savage.

It seems strange that steps were not taken to obtain the rediscovered Adam full score from New York for the Royal Ballet's new version. No doubt it would be somewhat naïve for modern orchestral use as it stands (nobody yet has apparently investigated or described it), but it would have provided a consistent basis for orchestral revision instead of the present patchwork.

Among the changes now made I am not enthusiastic about the replacement of the Peasant Girl's solo. Although it substitutes a finer piece of music, it seems to me much too weighty and emotionally expressive for its present, purely decorative context. Restoring the scene of Berthe's mime is justified more on dramatic than musical grounds, but the additional passages for Hilarion have the merit of pointing an effect of *leitmotiv* almost negatived by the cuts in the old versions. The classical-type fugue for the ensemble of Wilis before the final *pas de deux* is still omitted, although Mary Skeaping's version for the Swedish Royal Ballet, as danced at the 1957 Edinburgh Festival, deployed it to effective choreographic purpose.

Even now only two of the 16 main sections in the score are performed intact. Many of the minor cuts are merely the shortening of repeated phrases to fit the choreographic pattern, but I would have thought that the ballet could well make use of every bar that is available. It would still be short measure for a full-evening programme, and the absence now of sizeable portions of the score implies a lack of choreographic imagination in grasping the shape of the ballet as a whole. The company has been content to tinker with parts where a radical overhaul was chiefly required, but Lanchbery's conducting at the first Covent Garden performance of the new version showed that the outcome is at any rate serviceable, and more satisfying than the old.

In the following summary the numbers and titles are those appearing in the 1841 piano score :

ROYAL BALLET 1961

Score based on piano arrangement published by H. le Boulch from the 1841 plates, with additions by Bergmüller and others unknown. Orchestrators include Robert Irving, Gordon Jacob, revised and extended by John Lanchbery and Richard Temple Savage.

Introduction

Curtain up before end of *Andante* section, showing Albrecht emerging from hut (previously curtain up earlier, showing Albrecht going *into* the hut).

Cuts: p. 2, bars 5-8, 15-16.

No. 1 *Les Vendanges*

Cut: p. 5, bars 21-38.

No. 2 *Entrée du Prince*

Cut: p. 7, bars 19-20.

No. 3 *Entrée de Giselle*

Complete.

No. 4 *Retour de la Vendange*

Berthe's mime scene restored complete.

Cut: p. 14, bars 20½-32½.

No. 5 *La Chasse.*

Hilarion's mime scene restored. Original Adam orchestration from New York score.

Cuts: p. 24, bar 40 to p. 25, bar 27 (Court entry); p. 29, bars 4-16 (Bathilde's mime).

No. 6 *Scène d'Hilarion.*

Cut: p. 31, bars 25-28.

No. 7 *Marche des Vignerons*

Peasant *pas de deux* (Bergmüller) inserted after p. 34, bar 8. Girl's solo is now "Pas des Vendanges dansé par Giselle et Loys" formerly pp. 36-7, with bars 36-43 and 72-77 cut.

Pp. 34 (line 2)-35 now Coda for Peasant ensemble, after which Giselle's *Variation* (attributed to Drigo or Minkus) inserted from Busser's 1924 score.

Albrecht's solo — Cuts: p. 39, bars 12-13, 22-36; p. 40, bars 1-9, 18-25.

Galop general — Cuts: p. 44, line 3, to p. 45, bar 9.

No. 8 *Final.*

Cuts: p. 46, bars 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14-20 (Hilarion); p. 47, bars 17½-36½ (Giselle); p. 48, bars 5-6, 9-10, 13-14 (Hilarion summoning Court); p. 49, bar 11 to p. 50, bar 12 (Prince demanding explanation); p. 52, bars 6-7 (Giselle).

ACT II

No. 9 *La halte des chasseurs.*

First 12 bars in E-flat (instead of D).

Cuts: p. 56, bar 13, to p. 57, bar 7; p. 59, bar 9, to end (Hunter's mime); p. 61, bars 6-9 (Hunter's fright).

No. 10 *Apparition at Scène de Myrtha.*

Cuts: p. 63, bar 28, to p. 64, bar 9; pp. 64-5, E-flat sections; p. 69, bars 2-9.

No. 11 *Apparition de Giselle.*

Complete.

No. 12 *Entrée des Paysans.*

First 14 bars in F (instead of G) to prepare for No. 13. Remainder cut.

No. 13 *Entrée d'Albert et Wilfride.*

Cut: p. 80, bar 14, to p. 81, bar 20.

No. 14 *Scène des Wilis.*

Cuts: p. 87, bar 6, to end of p. 88; p. 89, bars 9-12, 23-32; p. 90, bar 20; p. 92, bar 27, to end of p. 93 (Wilis' fugue).

No. 15 *Grand Pas de Deux.*

Cuts: p. 97, bars 18-25, 31-2.

Giselle's apocryphal *variation* "importée des Ballets Russes (auteur inconnu)", a waltz version of the *scène d'amour* from Act 1, is inserted 4 bars before end of p. 98.

No. 16 (No title).

Cut: p. 104, bar 1, to p. 105, bar 4.

Noël Goodwin.

DAWN REPRIEVE: With the coming of the dawn, the Wilis' powers fade and so Albrecht's life is saved. Linden, Somes and Fonteyn in a moment towards the end of the ballet.

DECOR

A LOT of people have tried to break away and a lot of people have failed, some dismally and some honourably, but there is no skirting around the issue — there is no way to design ballets of the Romantic era other than to bow down to the dictates of tradition. Eugene Berman, a designer of undoubted splendour, tried to bring a Baroque approach to *Giselle*, and it all resulted in a series of stage pictures of great beauty which had nothing to do with the rustic simplicity of the old tear-jerker. Then there was Carzou, who performed miracles of vertical shrubbery for Petit's *Le Loup* and this prompted some-

(continued on page 38)

ONE MORE GAUDY NIGHT: Three drawings by Helen McGehee for the costumes in Martha Graham's new work. Left, design for Linda Hodes as Gaudy; centre, design for Helen McGehee herself as a Goddess; right, design for Mary Hinkson as a Reveller.

Spring back in New York

The New York spring seasons of the Martha Graham Company and American Ballet Theatre.

by ARTHUR TODD

THE MARTHA GRAHAM COMPANY

Visionary Recital

ANY time that Martha Graham, the greatest actress-dancer and innovator of our time, chooses to mount a New York season with her dance company, she inevitably makes everything else seem less exciting by comparison. The indefatigable Graham, who has been a dance soloist for more than 35 years, never has been so glowing nor incandescent on the stage before, it seems, and her historic season which started on a high key, ended, as it always does, on a note of triumph.

On the opening night of her season, a host of notables in the fields of dance, theatre, and the allied arts, were on hand to view the world premèrie of *Visionary Recital,* choreographed by and including Miss Graham. The score was by Robert Starer, of the Juilliard School of Music, and the setting was by Rouben Ter-Arutunian, with costumes designed by the choreographer and superb lighting devised by Jean Rosenthal. The programme note read:

Along the corridors of memory walk images of love, hate, desire, despair, calculated cruelty and shame.

"The bravest man is he who dares to face his tomorrow; the greatest coward is he who dares to remain behind hand with his own perfection."—Avicenna.

This is a visionary recital of "events whose scene and action are set in the world of the Imaginable"—which is the heart of man.

There are three aspects of Samson, a man blinded by his own strength and reborn through his vision.

"Out of the eater came forth meat and out of the strong came forth sweetness."—Judges 14:14.

SAMSON

The Dedicated ..... BERTRAM ROSS
The Destroyer ..... PAUL TAYLOR
The Tempter ..... DAN WAGONER

DALILAH

The Awakener ... MARTHA GRAHAM
The Betrayer ..... MATT TURNEY
The Seducer ..... AKIKO KANDA

"and now let us come to our recital"

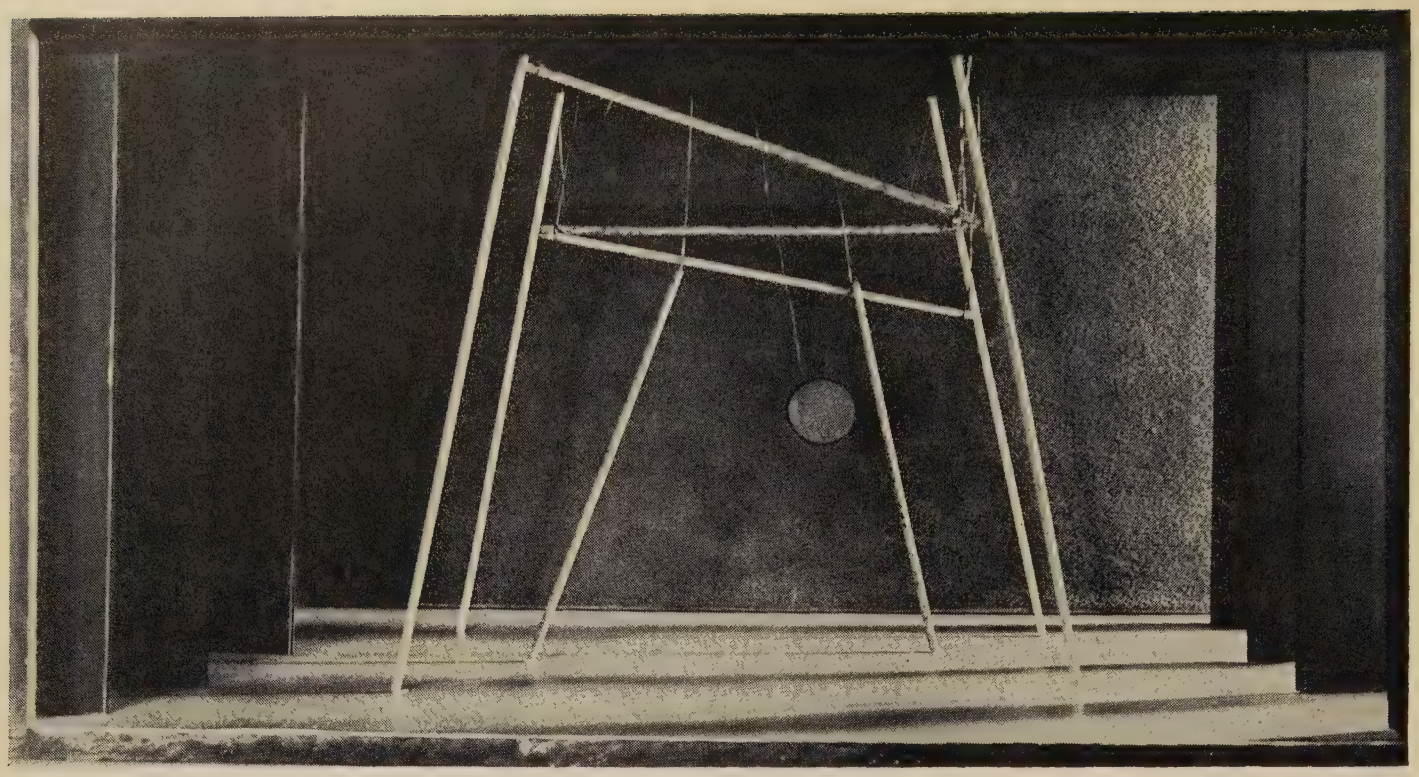
Since this première followed directly after a transcendent performance of *Seraphic Dialogue,* in which three phases of Joan of Arc (as Warrior, Martyr and Saint) were portrayed, it seemed disquieting, to say the least, to come upon a new work that presented us with three versions of Samson — The Dedicated, The Destroyer and The Tempter, as well as a Delilah (also portrayed in three versions) as The Awakener, The Betrayer and The Seducer. At its first performance, the phases of each of these rôles did not quite come off in the manner the choreographer obviously intended. Since then, this work has been revised, tightened and improved, but, like last year's *Alcestis,* it still is not what one might term top-drawer Graham. The three phases of Samson were well composed but, in spending her chief time on these, Graham has not yet done justice to her own rôle nor to those of Akiko Kanda and Matt Turney. In a dull, black, full-skirted dress, the choreographer appeared to be of another epoch than Kanda and Turney, both of whom wore gold brocade tops and coloured tights that were unflattering, to say the least. Rouben Ter-Arutunian's walls and promenades, made of black and white plastic hose-like material, were visually interesting but gave little feeling of the corridors mentioned in the Old Testament. Starer's score seemed satisfactory and serviceable rather than noteworthy.

One More Gaudy Night

MARTHA GRAHAM'S second new work, *One More Gaudy Night,* was in the jesting mood of *Acrobats of God,* though not as brilliantly witty, nor was it as sexually exciting as her quite marvellous *Embattled Garden.* However, it had a notable score by Halim El-Dabh, composer of *Clytemnestra,* which employed a considerable amount of drumming. Also outstanding was Jean Rosenthal's skeletal setting. The costumes were after sketches by Helen McGehee. According to its programme note, this work was:

A fantasy suggested by Shakespeare's lines in "Antony and Cleopatra":

Antony:
Let's have one other gaudy night.—Call to me
All my sad captains: fill our bowls; once more
Let's mock the midnight bell.



ONE MORE GAUDY NIGHT: *The model of Jean Rosenthal's setting for Martha Graham's new work which recently had its world première in New York.* *Photo: Kenneth Johnson.*

Cleopatra:
It is my birthday:
I had thought to have held it poor; but, since my lord
Is Antony again, I will be Cleopatra.

This tells no story and points no moral but might be considered as a possible prologue to a tragedy.

Musician ..... EDWARD THOMAS
Antony ..... PAUL TAYLOR
Cleopatra ..... ETHEL WINTER
Gaudy ..... LINDA HODES
Revelers ... MARK HINKSON, AKIKO KANDA, ELLEN GRAFF, DAVID WOOD, ROBERT POWELL, DUDLEY WILLIAMS
A Goddess ..... HELEN McGEHEE
A God ..... CLIVE THOMPSON
Two Sad Captains ... RICHARD KUCH, DAN WAGONER

With the exception of Martha Graham and Bertram Ross, her partner, most of the major members of the company appeared in this work. Though all of them danced superbly, its chief excitement was, perhaps, in the début performances of two outstanding young Negro dancers from Jamaica, Clive Thompson and Edward Thomas (more news on these two dancers appears in our Dance and Dancers in America pages this month). This seemed a slight work that was more like an excerpt from a musical than from the genius of Martha Graham. What's more, certain sections bordered between the banal and burlesque and, consequently, appeared to be below this great choreographer's dignity. On the other hand, audiences seemed to find it highly amusing and many local critics were most generous in their praise.

Notwithstanding the two premières and some magnificent revivals, it was Graham's masterwork, *Clytemnestra,* that undoubtedly swept off with the top honours of this two-week season. In this evening-length dance work, as heretofore, Graham gave proof that she remains the greatest dance actress of our day as well as being a superb choreographer for her own dancers. What's more, on seeing this work for a third season, one becomes increasingly aware of its monumental quality. Indeed, after viewing all four of its performances this season, one wishes that the B. de Rothschild Foundation, which presented this season, or some other far-sighted organisation, foundation, individual or film company would pay to have this work filmed in a theatre performance, similar to the superb records of the Royal Ballet's *Ondine* or the Bolshoi Ballet's film, so that the world at large and the future would have a permanent record of this crowning work in Martha Graham's career.

Bertram Ross, who is now the top male dancer in Graham's company, was superb in *Clytemnestra* (as well as in the revival of *Night Journey),* and Helen McGehee as Electra, Ethel Winter as Helen of Troy and Mary Hinkson as Athena were similarly noteworthy. Two other major dancers of the company, Linda Hodes as Cassandra, and Dan Wagoner as Agamemnon, were outstanding and of all the company have made the greatest progress since last season.

As noted previously, two former and vitally important soloists, Yuriko and Gene McDonald, are no longer with the company, and they are sadly missed in both *Clytemnestra* as well as in the rest of the repertoire. Richard Kuch, who now replaces Gene McDonald in the triple rôles of Paris, King of Hades and The Watchman, has caught only the surface vestiges of the rôle, but the mystic inner essence and the innate lyricism of these rôles seem quite beyond his powers. Likewise, Paul Taylor, as Aegisthus, always seems to dance as Paul Taylor in his own odd and eccentric way, and his style appears often at variance with the rest of the dancers. Furthermore, he tends to ignore everyone else on stage and thus sets up little or no communication with the audience. In addition, Robert Powell, who now has been advanced to Richard Kuch's previous rôle of Apollo, is primarily a decorative dancer. On the other hand, however, the chorus of The Furies was danced with electric violence, especially by Lois Schlossberg, Miriam Cole and Ellen Graff, as well as by Nancy Stevens, Betty de Jong, Lynne Kothera and Noemi Lapzeson. Also notable was David Wood, who portrayed the Messenger of Death brilliantly, and who also served as rehearsal director for the Graham repertoire.

There were also many other highlights during this season. I was delighted, as previously, by *Acrobats of God,* and I still found *Seraphic Dialogue* one of the most glowing and moving works in the entire repertoire. Though I believed that Paul Taylor was miscast in the romantic leads in *Embattled Garden* and *Diversion of Angels,* I continued to find the former quite ravishing and the latter an eloquent and lyric hymn to young love. Last season's *Alcestis* still remains a completely unrewarding work from every point of view. However, *Night Journey* has never had so much impact and drama as it had this season and, next to *Clytemnestra,* it was the other towering experience of an unforgettable season. Also, there is nothing but praise for the magnificent musical direction of Robert Irving and the superb lighting by Jean Rosenthal, who is a genius in her chosen field. However, the chief glory of the season remained Martha Graham. Long may she continue!

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE

DURING its recent two-week season at the Broadway Theatre, American Ballet Theatre proved that it has again literally lifted itself up by its boot-straps

after its disastrous season at the Metropolitan Opera House just a year ago. Since the company has been playing almost continuously since then — both in Europe and Russia as well as in a recent but short cross-country tour here — perhaps the answer is this company, like any other, requires continuous performance, rehearsals and classes to weld it into a unit. Though neither the casting nor the repertoire today approximate the level of 15 years ago, it is still vastly better in many areas than it has been for the last few years.

In the first place, American Ballet Theatre does have some major stars and soloists. Among them are Maria Tallchief, Erik Bruhn (who flew over from Denmark for one week of the season), Lupe Serrano, Toni Lander (apparently just visiting for this current season), Royes Fernandez, Scott Douglas, John Kriza and Glen Tetley. And among the soloists there is at least one treasure for any company, the lyric and lovely Sallie Wilson, who could win over any audience in almost everything.

On the other hand, however, the current repertoire (though it has mercifully been shortened from that of a year ago) is, for the most part, becoming tedious to its regular followers. Standards such as *Billy the Kid, Les Sylphides, Giselle,* the one-act *Swan Lake, Rodeo* and *Fancy Free* are obvious necessities. Violently missed and lacking are all of Antony Tudor's ballets, which helped enormously in developing this company into its finest flowering. And, as far as I'm concerned, the rest of the present repertoire should be quietly retired for the present. This wish would include *Bluebeard,* which is now a bore; *The Combat,* since it is nothing now but a *tour de force*; certainly *Graduation Ball,* which has become dated and insipid; and *Peter and the Wolf,* which must now be monotonous even to children. I'm also weary of Birgit Cullberg's *Lady from the Sea,* which has been strikingly miscast this season, as well as her *Miss Julie,* which is far too long. In all fairness to Miss Cullberg, however, it might be added that under her direction perhaps her two ballets would appear fresher.

Since American Ballet Theatre now does boast some dancers who are equal to any pyro-techniques involved, I suppose we must content ourselves to see nearly all of the *grand pas de deux* tossed off effortlessly and brilliantly. What this company really needs, however, is four to six major new ballets by young and gifted choreographers that they (the company) must, if necessary, search out and find and then diligently nurture and develop over a long period of time. Aside from borrowing Kenneth MacMillan, this company has unfortunately not been able to develop his equal here nor, for that matter, anyone else on a par with either Norman Morrice or John Cranko. However, if American Ballet Theatre only plans to be a touring company, perhaps its choreographic needs are not so vital as one might imagine.

POINTS ON JAZZ: *Scott Douglas and Elisabeth Carroll in Dania Krupska's ballet which had its New York première during Ballet Theatre's current season.*

For one of its two New York premières American Ballet Theatre mounted a very charming restaging of *Grand Pas — Glazounov* by Frederic Franklin after George Balanchine's choreography. Premièred on the second night of the season, with Toni Lander and Royes Fernandez in the leads, it didn't really take fire until a few nights later, when Maria Tallchief and Erik Bruhn assumed the principal rôles, and then it was a major success. Neither the setting, which looked like a familiar series of columns, nor the costumes, received programme credit. The men wore tops that were almost cobalt blue, combined with grey tights, and the girls were in a paler blue that seemed over-decorated with fancy trimmings. A decided asset, however, was Sallie Wilson's dancing of the fifth variation.

Dania Krupska's *Points on Jazz,* which was premièred on the company's tour earlier this year, should never have been allowed to reach New York. Literally, it was a compendium of every dance cliché that has ever been produced for sound pictures, Broadway musicals and television shows. It has nothing whatsoever in the

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LADY FROM THE SEA: *Glen Tetley in Birgit Cullberg's ballet based on Ibsen which was revived for Ballet Theatre's New York season.* *Photo: Jack Mitchell.*

THE UNCHANGING FACES OF MONTE CARLO: Palm trees, the Casino and Alicia Markova are features of Monte Carlo which appear to remain unchanged through the years.

Fifty Years On

London's Festival Ballet celebrates the fifty years since Diaghilev gave his first season in Monte Carlo and Alicia Markova recalls what it was like when she first joined the Diaghilev Ballet in 1925.

by PETER WILLIAMS

HALF a century ago a group of Russian dancers left the cold of winter in their native country and found themselves in the Mediterranean sunshine with palm trees sprouting around them in almost tropical profusion and a general air of extreme elegance. Everything about Monte Carlo is right for the creation and performance of ballet, it's the jewelled setting that the art so vitally needs — but it was Diaghilev who first thought of it.

So it was that on April 9, 1911 (Grigoriev gives the date as April 6 but the programme in Monte Carlo clearly shows it was April 9) that the Diaghilev Ballet gave its first performance in Charles Garnier's miniature reproduction of the Paris Opéra and that night started a whole chain of ballet history which continues to be made there even to this day. The programme consisted of *Giselle* (with Karsavina and Nijinsky) and *Schéhérazade* (with Karsavina, Nijinsky, Bolm, Grigoriev and Cecchetti), and it is worth noting how much Karsavina danced that evening.

With this season Diaghilev had found a home in Europe, for although it meant a great deal of hard work, it also meant somewhere where the company could relax and have something remotely approaching a home life. And, apart from the war years, it was to Monte Carlo that the company returned annually, and it enjoyed the patronage of Monaco's Prince and the Grimaldi family as well as of names that were fabulous in various other walks of life.

It was in the early winter of 1925 that a little English girl, Alicia Marks, left the cold winter in *her* native country and journeyed through the fog, accompanied by her mother, to find sunshine and world fame, and so Alicia Markova came to Monte Carlo and to the Diaghilev Ballet with which she remained until it disbanded on the death of Diaghilev in 1929. In those days there was not much money to spare so she and her mother had to live in inexpensive lodgings. One of the spurs that drove her on was that one day she would be rich and famous enough to stay at the chic Hotel de Paris, where Diaghilev always stayed with the most intimate members of his close circle. Now, of course, she has realised this ambition, and always she stays there. It was here that I found her a few weeks ago when she was in Monte Carlo to dance with Julian Braunsweg's London's Festival Ballet, who had been chosen to dance for the Easter season in celebration of the fifty years since Diaghilev first made Monte Carlo one of the world's ballet centres — but more of that later.

The past dies hard and in Monte Carlo the wind of change is a gentle zephyr, though the last two years have seen a more lively breeze — skyscraper blocks of flats are sprouting up in as much profusion as the palm trees and they grow very much quicker. But the past still lingers on round every corner. "I feel that Diaghilev is going to appear at any moment," Markova was saying, "why only this morning while I was rehearsing I kept on feeling he was watching me and I looked up and there on the wall of the rehearsal room was his photograph, just where he always used to sit. This room hasn't changed much really — the cream paint is the same and the unshaded light bulbs. Of course the strapontin seats, which always made such a clatter when anybody got up, have gone, recently I think. The curtain, which used to divide the room so that one could have a private class while the general class was going on, that's gone too. Then over here in the corner is the little room which Grigoriev used as an office. The old entrance to the rehearsal room has been changed because we always came in from the terrace looking over the sea and outside there used to be a famous bench which we used to sit on so as to get fresh air between rehearsals. There was no air-conditioning then and it seems that there still isn't any.

"Diaghilev seldom came to watch rehearsals in the morning, always after lunch and then he would only come and see works when they were in a fairly advanced state, that is unless there was something special he had to see. He would come in with his entourage and we would all bow and curtsey and of course we could never approach him directly. If there was anything we wanted to ask it had to be done through Grigoriev.

"Not all the classes were held here. Madame Cecchetti would give classes at 9 in the old Beaux Arts Cinema, which has been pulled down now. It was where the Sporting Club now stands. We worked very hard in those days. Class was always from 9 o'clock sharp until 10.15, then at 10.30 we had rehearsals until lunch time. After that we rehearsed from 3 until 6, then, if there was no performance, we rehearsed again at 9 until all hours according to how much had to be got through. It was the one chance in the whole year of getting the whole repertory back into shape because continual touring caused continual wear and tear. The same went for the scenery and costumes, which were all repainted and remade in the workrooms here."

Markova and I left the rehearsal room and started to wend our way through the incredible labyrinth which is back-stage-Monte-Carlo-Casino. There are so many different levels, so many little hidden staircases and small passages that even I who know it well can easily get lost, but Markova's memory was better than Ariadne's thread.

"Now this was where I first danced in *Swan Lake*. It was at a special matinée." We were standing in the room where the cabaret is today and which has had another smaller room constructed inside the old one, though the walls of the outer shell still retain all their Edwardian rococo. "Here I danced Odette for the first time, with Danilova and Ninette de Valois as leading swans, before Prince Pierre and

Princess Charlotte. In those days it used to be called the Salle Ganne. Diaghilev occasionally gave charity performances here."

We moved on. "The stage door has been changed. Now it is on the street but in those days it was on the terrace of the Casino and we used to run from the rehearsal room to the theatre in our practice clothes. We ran along the terrace amongst all the smart people promenading." As we walked possibly more sedately along the terrace, though Markova moves with such speed and ease that she might have been the same age as when she first went to Monte Carlo, she suddenly stopped. "Look! Here is the same syringa bush. It grows under the star dressing room just as it did in Karsavina's day. In the evening when it is warm the scent drifts up and it's lovely. I never smell syringa without thinking of this tree."

And the star dressing-rooms, well they haven't changed at all, they're tiny and hardly room to swing a cat. "Here, at the back of the stage there used to be a boxed-in place which was Lifar's dressing room. It's now part of the scene dock. The dressing rooms for the rest of us downstairs were pretty cramped too. The stage has not altered at all and nor has the auditorium. Now it has been re-gilded and re-decorated it looks just as it used to. What a wonderful theatre it is, so much atmosphere."

We moved out into the sunshine and sat down on the terrace of the old Café de Paris, now for some unknown reason called "Le Scotch Club". "We used to come and sit here and have coffee or chocolate between rehearsals. Diaghilev would give big luncheon parties here and they would sit into the late afternoon discussing the new works. There used to be a box hedge which separated that part of the Café from the rest. Otherwise he did most of his business in his bedroom at the Hotel de Paris. That was his office.

"Another thing has changed — the Sunday matinée. It was the smartest performance of the week. People used to come from all along the coast, all very dressy, and they would have lunch at the Hotel de Paris and then the performance started at 3.30. It was always a big occasion but today it is just like any other matinée."

On the whole, though, the changes are paltry compared with the way the rest of the world has changed since 1911 — and since Markova first went to Monte Carlo in 1925. What of the ballets? The special performance which London's Festival Ballet gave on April 4 consisted of three works from the Diaghilev repertory and all Fokine ballets — *Les Sylphides, Schéhérazade,* the Polovtsian dances from *Prince Igor,* and sandwiched in between, Carter's *Grand Pas des Fiancées* from *Swan Lake.* In the royal box was Prince Pierre who was originally responsible for the Diaghilev Ballet coming to Monte Carlo, Prince Rainier and Princess Grace, and the audience had put their best feet forward and were as well dressed and glittering as any audience you are likely to see in Europe today. Even if the ballets were possibly not up to the Diaghilev 1911 standards (no, not even I was alive then) then I think they were as well done as you are likely to see these particular works in the world today.

Apart from *Schéhérazade,* there was nothing very different to what I wrote two months ago about this company when it was at La Fenice in Venice apart from the fact that the company all round is dancing far better and with more assurance. *Les Sylphides* was given with great understanding, and a newcomer from Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo — Irina Borowska — danced the first *Mazurka* and *Valse pas de deux.* She is the sort of dancer I like very much — tall, good technique and a strong resemblance to Danilova. In *Sylphides* her attack was rather too strong, but I feel this will soften with time. In her I would say that Festival have the kind of ballerina they are badly needing. But of her and her partner Michael Maule (not dancing at this particular performance) I will have more to say at a later date.

The great thing about the *Schéhérazade* performance was the costumes, from Massine's Nervi company, which are most faithfully reproduced from the Bakst designs — and what wonderful costumes they are! Again it is possible to see the masterly and subtle way in which Bakst used colour and shape. This almost compensated for the fact that a lot of detail is missing from Woizikovski's revival and an interpolated *pas de deux* for Zobeide (Marilyn Burr) and the Gold Slave (Vassilie Trunoff) created by Nicholas Beriosoff, was vulgar and out of style with Fokine's choreography. None the less there is all the fabric here for building up a really worthy revival of the old harem horror-comic and seeing these costumes again in all their glory makes me think that the ballet is still worth working on.

Prince Igor suffered from a shortage of males, all suffering from leg and knee troubles, so the overwhelming masculinity of the ballet was more sparse than Fokine originally intended. However, the chorus from the Monte Carlo Opera dressed the stage, dressed very quaintly in some cases and several centuries out of date, and their singing made up in volume what the stage lacked in males — their acting would win no prizes at the Actors' Studio. Trunoff put in a great deal of energy as the Polovtsian Chief and carried the ballet with him. In both this and as the Gold Slave in the previous ballet he proved what a really invaluable character dancer he is. Diane Westerman was too hectic as the young Polovtsian Girl and Janet Kedge was a captive Princess who had apparently escaped from *Kismet* — but a great deal of work all round has to be done to make this as good as the old Beriosoff production.

If Diaghilev might lift a wry eye at the changes that years have wrought in the ballets he instigated fifty years ago, I think he would have been interested in Jack Carter's *The Witch Boy,* given in a previous programme. Ronald Emblen has developed his interpretation of the title rôle since Venice, it is now a *tour de force,* and so have the other principals — Belinda Wright as Barbara Allen, Skouratoff as the Pastor and Jean-Pierre Alban as the Conjur Man. I think Diaghilev would also approve of Balanchine's *Bourrée Fantasque,* which is now acquiring much of its original polish. There are many things he would have liked about Deirdre O'Conaire and Skouratoff in Poulenc's *Aubade* but he would have had Chirico design some scenery. He would have been happy that *London Morning* was not given and finally shelved, we hope, for good. I don't know what he would have thought of his little Alicia Markova dancing Pavlova's solo, *The Dying Swan,* but I think he would be proud of the way she has kept her remarkable style and qualities, all she first learned on his command, over the years; I know he would have approved of her ageless beauty. I am sure he would be proud that his dancers, Markova and Anton Dolin, had been mainly responsible for forming the company in which another of his dancers, Léon Woizikovski, is now Regisseur General. A company which has proved, as it has also proved over the past ten years, to be the most popular company to visit Monte Carlo, for the whole season was a triumphant one. I doubt if even in Diaghilev's wildest dreams he would ever have thought that his successor on the Mediterranean would have been British and that it was owing to him that the most notable ballet event in the intervening forty-nine years has been the remarkable ascendance of British ballet companies. So ascendance of British ballet companies.

WOIZIKOVSKI GIVES CLASS: Léon Woizikovski, one of Diaghilev's most famous character dancers and now Festival Ballet's Regisseur General, gives class in the Monte Carlo rehearsal room. Whistle on wrist, he claps out the rhythm.

THE AURORA OF A GENERATION: Margot Fonteyn, whose performances of the Princess Aurora rôle have brought international fame to herself and also to the company she heads — the Royal Ballet. Photo: Houston Rogers.

The Sleeping Beauty *(Part Two)*

by CLIVE BARNES

In last month's Dance and Dancers, **Clive Barnes delved into the history and productions of** The Sleeping Beauty. **This month he considers some of the most important performances in the work, mainly since the last war.**

TO return to versions seen in Britain, of the three recent productions of *The Sleeping Beauty,* only the 1946 Covent Garden version was of a sufficiently high standard to give a fair impression of the old classic. In recent years it has been illuminated by the emergence of Margot Fonteyn's Aurora. Although Fonteyn first danced Aurora in 1939, it was not until 1948 that her portrayal assumed something approaching its present proportions. From that time it grew virtually from performance to performance, more satisfying, until by 1954 it stood as one of the finest performances to be seen in the Western ballet world, possessing a perfection that almost denies description or analysis.

In the first act her dancing was bouyant, assured and youthful, an unaffected abandon informing every movement. The Rose Adagio, precise yet rapturous in execution, revealed the Princess; the Variation, exquisitely timed with careless care, gave her age as sixteen. A smile, a look, a gesture were all small details that added to the characterisation, which itself came fundamentally from the music and choreography through her dancing. In the second act her portrayal acquired a mysterious and elusive allure; it was, in fact, a vision of Aurora, subtly differing from the flesh-and-blood Princess shown elsewhere. In the last act, gracious authority marked her maturity, and her dancing became more deliberate, more grand. As the music becomes increasingly formal, so did her portrayal; the spontaneous exuberance of the first act giving place to an air of sustained joyfulness. It was as though a girl had awakened into womanhood. All-in-all Fonteyn's is a remarkable realisation of the rôle's possibilities and implications, and one which I do not expect to be easily equalled.

Among the other dancers to appear as Aurora in this production, Violetta Elvin and Beryl Grey have both brought great distinction to the rôle. The radiance of Elvin and the lyrical virtuosity of Grey at her best, made their portrayals rewarding; at times both ballerinas gave performances almost, but not quite, worthy of Fonteyn, but they lacked the *ballerina assoluta's* uncanny consistency. Alicia Markova, who danced Aurora for the company in 1948, was never completely at home in the rôle, even though parts of her performance (both in the Vision Scene and in the last act *pas de deux)* have proved unforgettable.

Ten years later in the summer of 1958 Yvette Chauviré gave two guest performances of Aurora with the Royal Ballet. Although she had never danced the full-length rôle before, she gave a performance that immediately challenged comparison with the very finest of contemporary interpretations. The young girl, the vision and the confident princess facing marriage, were all clearly delineated in a characterisation that immediately seized upon the underscored, yet vital, dramatic aspect of the princess. She never once stepped outside the frame of her portrait, and her relationship with all the other characters was at all times sensitively portrayed. Her dancing throughout was elegant and easy, revealing delicate musical response and that instinctive flair of hers for the right choreographic phrasing.

Of the other dancers who have assumed the part of Aurora, Moira Shearer once showed great promise, which remained largely unfulfilled; Rowena Jackson, Elaine Fifield, Anya Linden and Annette Page, all extremely gifted technically, have revealed some of the part's potentialities, while Lynn Seymour and Doreen Wells (neither of whom have danced it at Covent Garden) have given an indication in their few performances that in time they may well be extremely fine Auroras. Aurora has also been danced by Rosemary Lindsay, Elizabeth Anderton (although not in London), and, soon after the war, by Pamela May. Avril Navarre has danced it in Edinburgh, and recently Antoinette Sibley in South Africa, neither of whom I saw.

However, in recent years, apart of course from Fonteyn, probably the most consistently notable performances have been those by Svetlana Beriosova and Nadia Nerina. Beriosova's beautifully poised and immaculately danced Aurora, makes a good contrast with Nerina's more exuberant and dazzling approach. But like Elvin before them, they both give performances any ballet company would be proud to own.

The dancers who have appeared as Aurora in International Ballet's production included Mona Inglesby, Hélène Armfelt, Claudie Algeranova and Joan Tucker, but possibly the most enjoyable performance, although immature, was that given by Anne Suren.

In *Aurora's Wedding* immediately before the war, the leading rôle was danced by Irina Baronova, Tamara Toumanova and Alexandra Danilova, all of whom justifiably had their fervent adherents; since the war Renée Jeanmaire for De Basil's Original Ballet Russe, Rosella Hightower and Marjorie Tallchief for the De Cuevas Grand Ballet, and Sonia Arova and Joan Tucker for George Kirsta's Original Ballet Russe, have all been presented with varying degrees of success. The Aurora *pas de deux* from the last act has been given as a separate *divertissement* by the Metropolitan Ballet (with both Arova and Beriosova), and the first act Rose Adagio, together with variations, was included in the repertory of Petit's Ballets de Paris, when it was danced by Jeanmaire, Colette Marchand, and, most notably, Nina Vyroubova. Another French company, Les Ballets des Champs Elysées, once had a very curious version of the Vision Scene in their repertory, entitled *Le Fôret*; the rôle of Aurora was dully danced by Irène Skorik.

The part of the Prince in the full-length ballet provides considerable difficulty for its interpreter; to give conviction to a character who strolls on to the scene halfway through the ballet, and even then only appears briefly, is no light task. In the Vision Scene the Prince, on his first appearance, requires an air of "Petrachian" love-lorn mooning. Subsequently the character develops and in the last act *pas de deux* he needs to be the Prince Charming of legend, exultant with love for his new bride.

Robert Helpmann and David Paltenghi, who were the first portrayers of the rôle at Covent Garden, both sustained the Vision Scene well — Helpmann's foppish melancholy being particularly well contrived — and partnered with distinction. Anton Dolin in his two guest appearances had complete command of the grand manner, but it was left to Michael Somes, who had the advantage of being able to dance a good variation, to show the full possibilities of Florimund. A worthy partner to Fonteyn, his dancing and characterisation set a high standard for his successors.

John Hart, John Field and Philip Chatfield all did sterling service in the rôle, while more recently the excellent partner-

ing, vigorous dancing and convincing acting (all perhaps in markedly differing proportions), of David Blair, Donald MacLeary, Bryan Ashbridge, Ronald Hynd, Desmond Doyle and Alexander Bennett (the latter not at Covent Garden) have been highly commendable. Florimund has also been danced by Alexis Rassine, and Gary Burne has danced the rôle in South Africa.

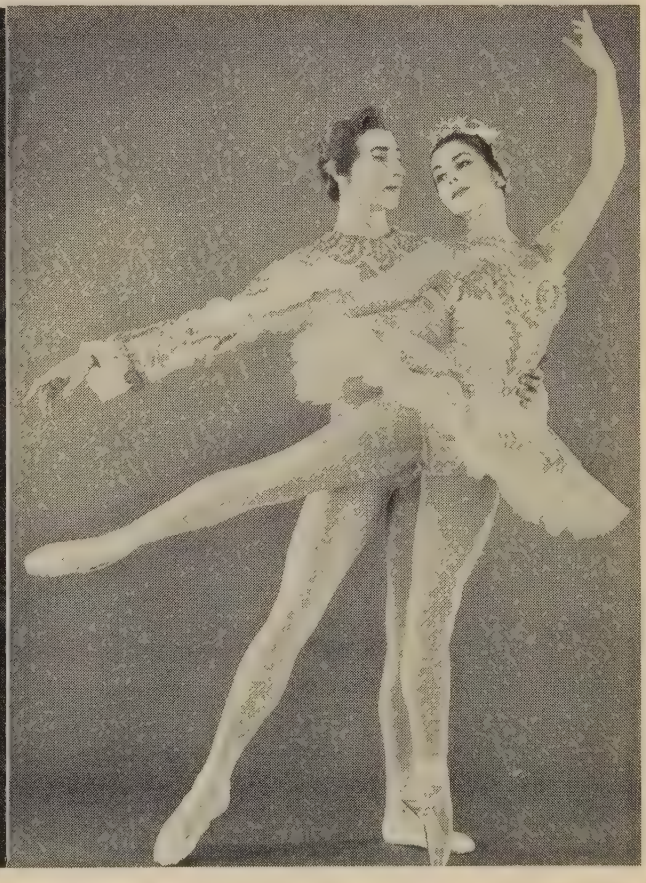
The Bluebird *pas de deux* suffers somewhat in the Royal Ballet production from being given as a virtuoso display piece rather than as a "narrative" *pas de deux*. Characterisation has been sacrificed to technique. The *pas de deux* is based on another of Perrault's fairy-tales, *L'Oiseau Bleu*, which tells how Princess Florine, ill-treated by her step-mother, is rescued by a handsome King who courts her disguised as a Bluebird. Nowadays few people would suspect this dramatic basis ; Florine's variation should indicate fear and apprehension, but since Tatiana Riabouchinska danced the rôle, this aspect of it has been overlooked by most other dancers. (Svetlana Beriosova, when she danced Bluebird for the Metropolitan Ballet, was among the honourable exceptions to this.)

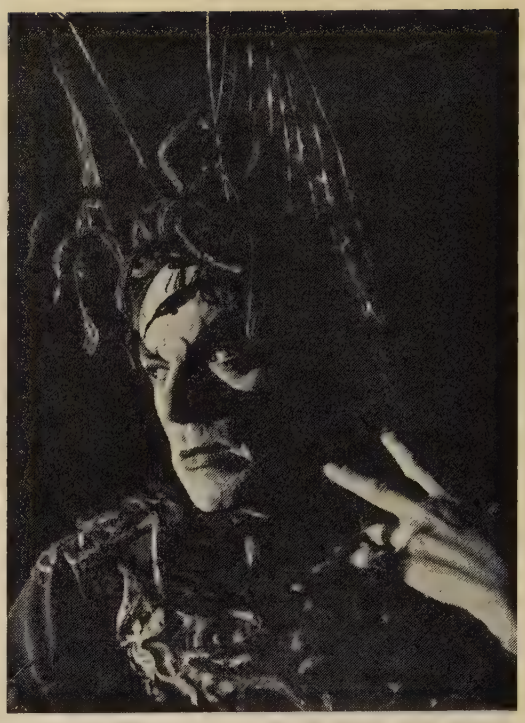
At Covent Garden the *pas de deux* has received some good and not a few dull performances. Of the women Violetta Elvin (who made her English début in this part on February 21, 1946, dancing under her maiden name of Prokhorova) has been outstanding. Avril Navarre, Rowena Jackson, Nadia Nerina, Anya Linden, Annette Page and Merle Park have all given technically exciting performances, but it was left to the young dancer Antoinette Sibley to restore some of the air of enchantment to a Princess who was fast becoming as disenchanted as a James Thurber cartoon. The rôle has also been danced by Pamela May, Margaret Dale, Pauline Clayden, Moira Shearer, Cynthia Mayan (née Blowers), Susan Alexander, and (out of town) Elizabeth Anderton, Audrey Farriss and Judith Maden.

The male Blue bird was originally danced at Covent Garden with commendable competence by Alexis Rassine and Harold Turner (formerly one of the best Bluebirds of his generation), but it was not until Brian Shaw assumed the rôle that the Royal Ballet acquired a Bluebird worthy of the part's associations. Shaw's speed and elevation combine to make him one of the most notable of contemporary interpreters of the rôle. Very considerable promise has been shown by Graham Usher and good performances were given earlier by Michael Boulton, David Blair and Peter Clegg. The rôle has also been danced by Michael Somes, Donald Britton, Gilbert Vernon, Kenneth MacMillan, Gary Burne and Bryan Lawrence, while Johaar Mosaval, Michael Coleman and Robert Mead have all danced the part outside London.

The Bluebird *pas de deux* has proved very popular when given as a separate display item, and many companies, both British and foreign, have presented it in this fashion. The *pas de deux* is also, of course, included in all productions of *Aurora's Wedding*. Before the war the male Bluebird was given by most of the dancers one would expect, such as Stanislas Idzikowski, Anton Dolin and Serge Lifar, and a few one would not expect, such as Leonide Massine and David Lichine. Outstanding among the male Bluebirds of recent years have been Babilee and Igor Youskevitch. Other dancers who have taken the rôle with success include André Eglevsky, Erik Bruhn, Poul Gnatt, Pirmin Trecu, René Bon, Serge Golovine, John Gilpin and Gleb Evdokimov. Before the war Princess Florine had many well-known interpreters including Lydia Lopokova, Vera Savina, Alicia Nikitina, Alexandra

THREE ROYAL BALLET AURORAS : Above, Nadia Nerina in Act 1 (Photo : Houston Rogers). Below left, Svetlana Beriosova in Act 2 (Photo: Houston Rogers). Below right, Lynn Seymour in Act 3 with Desmond Doyle (Photo: Dominic).





CARABOSSE EXCHANGE: Above, Carabosse as she will be seen in Leningrad and London. Left, Carabosse being attacked by the four suitors of Aurora in the Kirov production. Right, Ray Powell as Carabosse in the Royal Ballet's production.
(Photo: Houston Rogers)

BLUEBIRD EXCHANGE: Left, the Royal Ballet's Brian Shaw and Annette Page, who will be seen in Leningrad. (Photo: Houston Rogers.). Right, the Kirov's Alexander Gribov, who will be seen in London.

THE AWAKENING : Liane Daydé and Serge Golovine in the Marquis de Cuevas production of The Sleeping Beauty, *which has enjoyed such a spectacular success in France and which has brought an awareness of the great classics to the audiences of that country.* *Photo : Lido.*

Danilova and Tatiana Riabouchinska. Among the more distinguished portrayals since the war have been Alicia Alonso, Margrethe Schanne, Celia Franca, Belinda Wright, Svetlana Beriosova, Maryon Lane (who like Trecu has never danced the *pas de deux* in the complete ballet), Harriet Toby, Mary Ellen Moylan, Violette Verdy and Nina Fedorova.

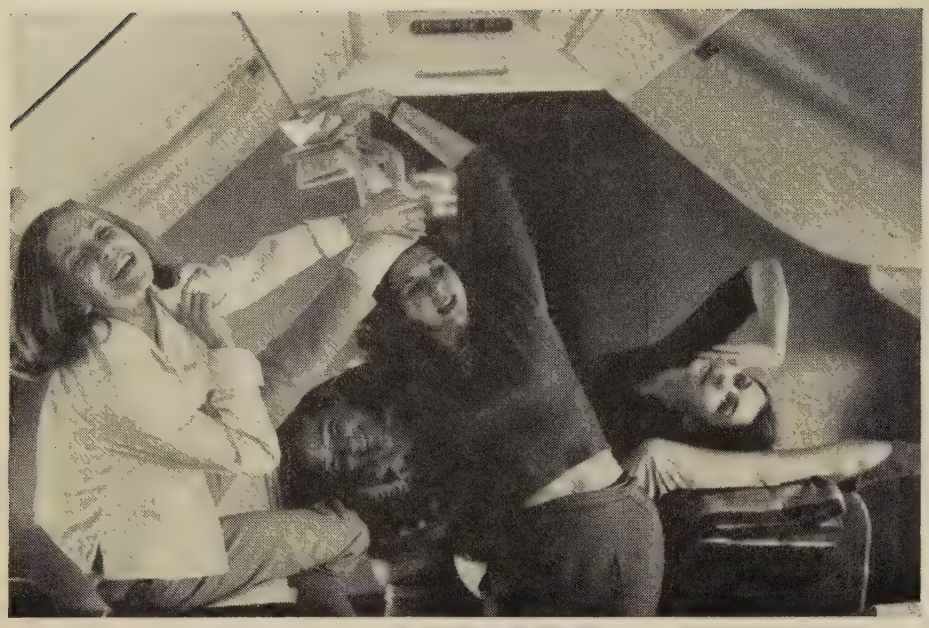
The third of the principal female rôles in *The Sleeping Beauty*, the Lilac Fairy, consists of one difficult variation and a great deal of walking around. For many years only Beryl Grey and Svetlana Beriosova had been entirely convincing, although the part had also been danced by Pamela May, Gillian Lynne, June Brae, Rosemary Lindsay, Mary Drage, Greta Hamby, Catherine Boulton and Anya Linden. However the Royal Ballet has recently acquired a most promising trio of Lilac Fairies in Georgina Parkinson, Deanne Bergsma and Vyvyan Lorrayne, all of whom hold out great hope for the future. In addition both Barbara Remington and Carole Needham have danced the part for the Royal Ballet's second company outside London.

Carabosse was, in the opinion of Slonimsky, the one character that Petipa completely misunderstood, and his conception has been radically altered by Soviet ballet-masters. (In the Leningrad production, for example, not only does Carabosse in the Prologue actually materialise a live girl in a puff of smoke to demonstrate what lies in store for Aurora, but immediately after the full-scale Panorama, she, accompanied by an army of rats, engages the Lilac Fairy in a battle royal.) Until 1960 the Covent Garden production tended to make a comic creation of Carabosse, a figure deriving more from the English tradition of pantomime dames than from the literal horror element found in fairy-tales. Within this limitation of the rôle's conception, interesting portrayals have been given by Robert Helpmann, Gordon Hamilton, Frederick Ashton, Ray Powell and Leslie Edwards. Last year, however, the rôle was strengthened by changes in the production that brought it much more in line with current Soviet thinking. Powell has taken the opportunity to rebuild his characterisation and now presents a far more plausibly malignant figure. For the second company Henry Legerton has also given an equally distinguished portrayal cast from a somewhat similar mould, and the part has also been taken by Margaret Hill (so far the Royal Ballet's only female Carabosse) and David Gordon.

It is not possible to mention all the various casts in the ballet's minor rôles. The Fairies in the Prologue have not always been entirely adequate and it would be invidious to mention them individually. Among the mimed rôles Leslie Edwards as Catalabutte, Pamela May, Julia Farron and Gerd Larsen as the Queen, David Davenport, Alfred Rodrigues and Derek Rencher as the King, Paul Reymond, Ray Powell, Franklin White and Stanley Holden as Gallison, Julia Farron, Mary Drage and Jacqueline Daryl as the Countess, have all appeared with distinction.

In the last act *divertissement* Florestan has had quite a few notable performers including Michael Somes, Norman Thomson, Philip Chatfield, Kenneth MacMillan, Christopher Gable and Keith Rosson. Among his sisters Gerd Larsen, Anne Negus, Julia Farron, Nadia Nerina, Anya Linden, Maryon Lane and Merle Park can all be remembered with pleasure. The Three Ivans have been led most notably by Alexander Grant, and with hardly less enthusiasm by Harold Turner, Gordon Hamilton, Ray Powell, William Wilson, Keith Milland and Lawrence Ruffell.

I forget who it was who first suggested that *The Sleeping Beauty* was, in a sense, the signature work of the Royal Ballet, but strangely yet unquestionably, no other work is so firmly identified with the company as this 19th-century Tchaikovsky classic. It heralded the company's arrival at Covent Garden, it secured the first -night success on the Royal Ballet's first ever New York season, and now — admittedly as a last-minute choice — it is to be taken back home to Russia. It will be interesting to hear what the Russians think of it, because although (and here I am guessing from the flimsiest evidence) I suspect that it is choreographically closer to Petipa than the current Soviet versions, it is nevertheless completely naturalised and is danced in a manner that is peculiarly English. On the whole the Royal Ballet's production deserves its international reputation, and it is by far the most successful classic revival in the Royal Ballet's repertory. Yet this does not say as much as it should, and it is to be hoped in the decades to come someone will awaken this *Sleeping Beauty* to complete life.



BALLERINAS UNFASTENED: Ignoring the "Fasten Seat Belt" notice, four of the ballerinas who headed the smaller Royal Ballet's tour of the Far East (Tokyo, Manila and Hong Kong) seem to think it is time for some limbering up. They are Doreen Wells, Anya Linden, Beryl Grey and Lynn Seymour on the outward journey to Tokyo. Margot Fonteyn, who appeared with the company only in Japan, left on another plane. Photo: Ralph Mace.

curtain up!

Balanchine gift for Rambert

IT is good news that Ballet Rambert is to get one of the Balanchine "gift" ballets. The company is preparing his *Night Shadow* for their annual summer season in July at the Sadler's Wells Theatre. There had been talk of this being put on last year, but it was postponed partly, I believe, owing to the great expense involved in their elaborate production of Bournonville's two-act *La Sylphide.* Another new creation for the company during this next season is a new work by the company's resident choreographer Norman Morrice.

Up to now two British companies have taken advantage of Balanchine's "gifts", the other being Festival Ballet, whose *Bourrée Fantasque* has added such distinction to their repertory. The Royal Ballet's *Ballet Imperial,* mounted some years ago, was not a gift, but it seems astounding that they have not yet thought fit to make use of Balanchine's extremely generous offer. It also seems astounding that they have not thought fit to take *Ballet Imperial* to Russia. It would have created the greatest interest there.

I seem to remember Dame Ninette de Valois, in an end-of-season speech, saying that the next season's productions would include a ballet by Jerome Robbins and two by Balanchine. This was about a decade ago and we got one by Balanchine, and I suppose in a sense his *Trumpet Concerto* for the Theatre Ballet could constitute the other. Now we are to get, at long last, a ballet by Robbins. Rumour has it that this work is not to be one of Robbins' typical "New York" works but a re-working of Stravinsky's *Les Noces.*

Considering the marvels that Robbins wrought on *L'Apres Midi d'un Faun,* this suggestion is not so alarming as it sounds. On the other hand, Bronislava Nijinska, who is still very much alive and active, created the ballet for Diaghilev, and what she did would still make one of the most notable works of this century.

Sent to Coventry

ANTON DOLIN must have formed more ballet companies than most people ever heard of. All through his career he has gathered round him new groups of dancers, sometimes for a specific purpose, sometimes to work together for a long period. Since leaving London's Festival Ballet, the company with which he was associated for a longer period than any other in his career, he has danced in Nice, Milan and South Africa, choreographed in Rome, and recorded a series of talks for TV.

His newest company is also connected with TV, being sponsored by ABC Television for their "Midlands Festival of Ballet" at Coventry for the week of July 10. On the face of it this would seem to be a one-week-stand company, but with Dolin you can never be quite sure. Certainly most of the stars announced come from established companies — Carla Fracci from La Scala, Milan; Margrethe Schanne and Kjeld Noack from the Royal Danish Ballet; Rosella Hightower and André Prokovsky from the de Cuevas company; Natalie Krassovska currently with American Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo (there's a geographical mix-up for you!) — but other stars are less "attached". John Gilpin, for instance, is at the moment only a guest artist with the Royal Ballet, and Colette Marchand is not with any company for the time, nor is Dolin himself.

So whether this venture develops or not, it is good to know that commercial television is trying to do something creative in the theatrical arts and that the provinces are, for once, going to see something that London is denied.

Man bites dog

THE English wedding of that charming New York City ballerina, Violette Verdy, got more than usual prominence in the press. In one of "the posh Sundays", for instance, the report actually found itself adjoining the Court Circular. Was this because she is a distinguished ballerina? I fear that the explanation is rather that the bridegroom, Colin Clark, is the son of Sir Kenneth and Lady Clark.

The result? The same influential paper took up with renewed vigour a campaign for New York City Ballet to come to London. If this was indeed to follow as the result of a society wedding, I would be all for more ballerinas marrying immediately.

Fact and fancy

AT 1 p.m. on Sunday April 23 the B.B.C. news bulletin described the queues which had formed outside the Royal Opera House before the booking opened at 9 a.m. for tickets for the Kirov Ballet season. The announcer added that it was estimated the people then queuing would occupy the box offices fully until they closed that evening.

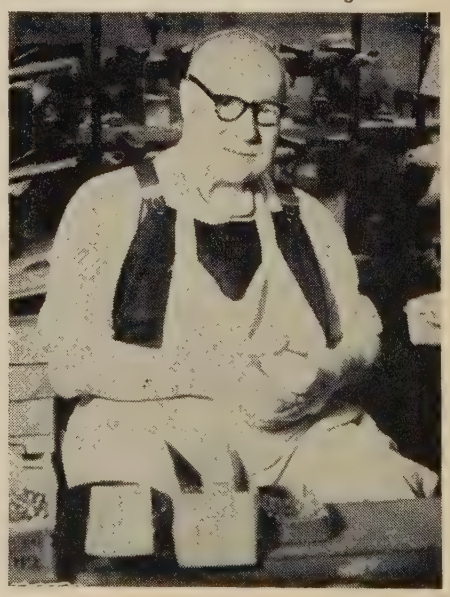
At 5.24 p.m. on the same Sunday, April 23, it was possible for anyone to walk up to the window selling gallery tickets and be served straight away — nobody was waiting there. If you wanted dearer seats it was a little less easy, although some friends of mine arrived shortly before 5 o'clock and had to wait about half-an-hour to be served.

The comments of the man who had queued for four days were not available!

The first decade

THE British ballet tradititon is, by world standards, so short that we think of the Royal Ballet (30 this year) and Ballet Ram-

HE MADE PAVLOVA'S SHOES: Now 68 and still making ballet shoes for Gamba's, John Indrisie made shoes for Pavlova. He remembers carving out the louis heels to make her shoes lighter.



bert (31 or 35 according to how you look at the facts) as old. We tend to forget that British companies overseas are also growing up. Ten years old this year is the National Ballet of Canada, and now it seems going more strongly than ever.

Surprisingly, no fewer than twelve of the original members are still with the company. This argues both good selection by director Celia Franca when the company was formed, and good morale among its members. I wonder how many other companies retain so high a proportion of their members during the formative years?

I still look forward keenly to seeing this company and others from the Commonwealth. Can the London County Council, perhaps, help to make this possible in their planned Commonwealth Arts Festival?

Onward from the Slade

FOR the last three years, *Dance and Dancers* has told about the work done by students of theatre design at London University's Slade School — and shown pictures of their work. It is encouraging to know that many of these who first became wider known through these pages are doing pretty well. Ian Spurling, for instance, is designing Kenneth MacMillan's version of the Weill/Brecht *Seven Deadly Sins* for the Edinburgh Festival and Judy Wood is designing Peter Darrell's work for the same occasion. Philip Prowse is to design MacMillan's ballet to Bliss music for the Royal Ballet in the Autumn. Pauline Whitehouse designed Peter Darrel's *Ode* for Western Theatre Ballet as well as many plays for the Oxford Rep. Ralph Adron, having designed Norman Morrice's *The Wise Monkeys* for Ballet Rambert, then went on to win first prize in the International Theatre competition. These and many others are forming the interesting group of new generation designers in England.

The public can see the work of the present students at the exhibition to be held at the Slade School in Gower Street for a week from June 29. Heads of ballet organisations might benefit from this and the general public could have a shot at guessing who tomorrow's designing stars might be.

Arrivals and departures

THE Covent Garden organisation is due for an increase in the near future. New arrivals are expected to: Brenda Taylor, soloist and wife of principal dancer Desmond Doyle; Rosemary Lindsay, ballerina and wife of stage director, William Bundy; Una Hale, singer and wife of stage manager, Martin Carr.

Rosemary Lindsay has for many years been a most valuable member of the Royal Ballet, and her retirement from the stage is much to be regretted, though the reasons for her departure are happy. At the moment it is uncertain whether she will return to ballet.

Departure: Gary Burne, the Royal Ballet principal soloist, who has left on a year's leave of absence. He has gone as principal dancer to Stuttgart, where John Cranko is the recently appointed ballet-master.

Exhibiting without designs

IN the past it has been the practice for ballet designers to give exhibitions of their stage designs. This sometimes is unfortunate because a designer's work is only completed when the final results are seen upon the stage — many designs are little more than working-drawings for dressmakers and scene-painters and builders, as they rightly should be. But it does not always follow that they are worthy of being shown in exhibition galleries.

It comes as something of a relief, therefore, to find that two of the finest ballet designers working in Britain today are going to hold exhibitions of paintings — and *no* designs. Both are, of course, painters of great talent and can stand up in their own right as painters rather than for their associations with the theatre. Kenneth Rowell, who has done most notable designs for Ballet Rambert, Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, the Walter Gore Ballet and most recently *Le Baiser de la Fée* for the Royal Ballet — is holding an exhibition of "Abstract Impressionism" at the Hazlitt Gallery from June 7 for four weeks. Nicholas Geogiadis, whose work is generally associated with Kenneth MacMillan and the Royal Ballet, will give an exhibition of abstract paintings at the Redfern Gallery in the early Autumn.

Death of Vanessa Bell

THAT British ballet has made ridiculously small use of British painters was made even clearer by the recent death of Vanessa Bell. She only designed two ballets — the first, *High Yellow*, for the Camargo Society, which though only given a handful of performances during the 1932 Savoy season proved to be so attractive that it has often been reproduced in books on ballet. The second was a new version of another Camargo ballet, *Pomona*, which she re-designed for the Vic-Wells Ballet revival, though later the original design by John Banting was used again.

In the 'thirties, our small struggling companies could not afford often to turn to an easel-painter of repute such as Vanessa Bell. Now we could do so and should do far more often. Of course half the difficulty of using easel-painters is finding somebody with the taste and ability to turn their work into terms of the theatre, and perhaps this is the person that ballet everywhere lacks to a frightening degree.

happy birthday to...

		June
Desmond Doyle	The Royal Ballet	16
Rozanne Ward	London's Festival Ballet	18
Toni Lander	American Ballet Theatre	19
Michael Hogan		19
Sonia Arova	Chicago Opera Ballet	20
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Celia Franca	Canadian National Ballet	25
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Alan Cunliffe	Ballet Rambert	27
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Henning Kronstam	The Royal Danish Ballet	29
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Kirsten Simone	The Royal Danish Ballet	1
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Patricia Wilde	New York City Ballet	16

Dancer You Will Know

Photo : Roy Round.

DAVID DREW

BORN in London on March 12, 1938. Started dancing in Bristol at the age of eight under Betty Vowles, Westbury School of Dancing. R.A.D. scholar from 1948 to 1953. Winner of the Adeline Genée Gold Medal in 1954. Joined Royal Ballet School in 1954 and the Company in 1955. In 1958 left to do National Service and was commissioned into the Royal Corps of Signals. Rejoined Royal Ballet in 1960.

Creations (for Sunday Ballet Club): Poor Boy in Finders Keepers; *Young Man in* Affair. *Rôles: Florestan and Cavalier in* The Sleeping Beauty; *Leading* Pas de Six *in* Swan Lake; *Innkeeper in* Coppélia; *Leading Coachman in* Petruska; *Pirate in* Mam'zelle Angot; *Hornblower in* The Rake's Progress; *Apollo in* Sylvia; *Notary in* La Fille Mal Gardée; *Yodelling Song in* Façade; *Cavalier in* Birthday Offering; Pas de Six *in* Prince of the Pagodas; *Yellow Boy in* The Shadow; *Capitano Adoncino in* The Lady and the Fool.

BEFORE David Drew went into the Army in 1958 he was already emerging as one of the Royal Ballet's most promising young male soloists. After an initial success in the *pas de six* in *Prince of the Pagodas*, he followed this with a number of fine performances, notable alike for their virile style, elegance and natural power of projection. On his return at first he naturally lapsed into temporary obscurity, but recently with his splendidly assured dancing in *The Lady and the Fool* he has once more shown all the qualities which marked out his early career.

It always reigns on Sundays

Sunday Ballet Club's ninth programme, at the Lyric Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue, on April 23.

by CLIVE BARNES

Photographed by ROY ROUND

THEY often say that nothing succeeds like success, but I've always noticed how failure is much more likely to dispose people towards you. Within certain demarcation lines, the Sunday Ballet Club has been notably successful with its last few programmes, yet this has made us no more tolerant of its standards of production and choreography. Indeed, we now take for granted the technical aptitude the Sunday Ballet Club has developed over the past few years, and accept the manner in which it overcomes its very considerable difficulties without comment.

The club's ninth production, given on April 23 at the Lyric Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue, opened with a very welcome programme-filler in the shape of Peter Darrell's *Chiaroscuro* danced by Western Theatre Ballet. As this interesting, albeit disturbing ballet has already been reviewed in these pages on more than one occasion, I do not propose to comment on it now. The cast included Hazel Merry, Brenda Last, Clover Roope, Dennis Griffith, Laverne Meyer and Oliver Symons. The rest of the programme consisted entirely of new ballets.

Vignettes

Choreography by Cristyne Lawson. Music specially composed by Ron Grainer.

One ..... CRISTYNE LAWSON
Two ..... GRAHAM SMITH, CRISTYNE LAWSON
Three ..... BILL DUTHIE, LINDSAY DOLAN, CRISTYNE LAWSON

ALTHOUGH *Vignettes* was the slightest new work to be produced on the programme, in some respects it might be thought the most interesting. Cristyne Lawson is a young coloured American, who after studying with Martha Graham and Louis Horst, appeared in a Broadway show, *House of Flowers,* and later joined Martha Graham's company. More recently she worked with the ill-fated Herbert Ross company on its European tour last year, and it was here that she met her husband, Graham Smith. She is now teaching and working in London with Audrey de Vos.

From this very interesting background, Cristyne Lawson brings to British ballet an unfortunately rare fund of American experience. For various reasons (chiefly economic, but also not unconnected with the difficulty of obtaining labour permits) fully-trained American modern dancers are rare things in the British dance world. Some, such as Richardina Jackson, have settled among us, and some others, like Michael Charnley, have had modern dance experience, but by and large the cultural interchange of dancers and teachers between Britain and America is pitifully small. In the field of modern dance this is

VIGNETTES: Left, Cristyne Lawson in the solo which is the first episode in her ballet to Ron Grainer's specially composed score. Right, Cristyne Lawson with her husband, Graham Smith, in the second episode from the same ballet.

nothing short of tragic, because now that the Central European tradition of expressionist dance has virtually dried up, practically everything that is of interest in non-classical, non-ethnic theatrical dancing has its roots in America.

Now how original *Vignettes* actually was, I am not really in a position to say. Certainly it was fluent and assured, and had about it all the hallmarks of creative choreography. On the other hand with an idiom apparently so familiar, yet at the same time so fundamentally strange, as American modern dance, it is very difficult for an English critic to know or say. Possibly, but not I think probably, this choreography would be old-hat seen in the context of the New York dance studios.

However, I enjoyed the work, and I am confident that Lawson has a great deal to teach us in England.

The ballet consisted of three dances. In the first Lawson herself played Freudian overtones on a red balloon floating from her toe on a string. It was a cutely erotic little number — funny, sexy but just a little too slick. The second piece was a yearning *pas de deux,* a soft dance with agreeably rough edges, compellingly well danced by Lawson and Graham Smith. The ballet ended with a lively, jivey *pas de trois* danced by Lawson again, this time with Bill Duthie and Lindsay Dolan. All the choreography had punch and flavour, while a pungent authenticity of atmosphere immediately placed it apart from most of the *soi disant* jazz dancing found hereabouts, which is normally so much more Greenwich Palais than Greenwich Village. The work was considerably helped by Ron Grainer's discreetly inventive jazz score, written for harpsichord, bass and percussion, with alternating alto sax, clarinet or flute. Grainer is becoming an expert at putting square music into round holes.

Trial

Choreography and Scenario by Peter Wright. Music by Villa-Lobos. Scenery and Costumes by Yolanda Sonnabend.

A Stranger ..... WILLIAM MARTIN
The Culprit ..... JOHN McDONALD
His Accomplice ... NICHOLAS CHAGRIN
A Young Girl
CHESTERINA SIM ZECHA
Her Mother ..... TESSA BREVNER
The Village Elder ..... JOHN REVAN
Villagers

IT has always been a mystery to me why after Peter Wright had created *A Blue Rose* in 1957 — a ballet which was neither very good nor very bad, but merely one of those unproved quantities typical of aspiring choreographers — the Royal Ballet appeared to lose interest in him. I should have thought that if a man's first ballet (he had, in fact, done two or three apprentice efforts for the Sadler's Wells Choreographic Group previously) was worth producing at Covent Garden, he would have received some subsequent encouragement, particularly as the work in question was far from being a total failure. In 1958 he produced *The Great Peacock* for the unsuccessful Edinburgh Festival Ballet, but since then he has been working mainly in musicals and TV.

As unlike *A Blue Rose* as possible, *Trial* is an always intense, occasionally frenetic, dance-drama concerned partly with rape, but even more with injustice. It is a taut work, displaying more sound professional sense than marked choreographic originality. And this, I suggest, is not at all a bad balance to find in a young choreographer's work, which are too often loaded down with invention for invention's sake.

TRIAL : *John McDonald and Chesterina Sim Zecha in the* pas de deux *in which she is raped during an early moment in Peter Wright's ballet. They are watched by a Stranger (William Martin), who is being gagged by the Culprit's Accomplice (Nicholas Chagrin).*

The scenario Wright has conceived for himself is strong and workable, showing perhaps, like so many of the dramatic scenarios now current in ballet, a certain cinematic influence. The story is almost that classic Western about the stranger in town. But taking his lead from the Villa-Lobos tone poem *Uirapuru* to which the ballet is set, Wright has made the *locale* of the ballet a primitive village faintly suggestive of South America. The stranger witnesses a rape. Held prisoner by an accomplice of the culprit, he is powerless to intervene. But when the girl victim is called upon by the village elders to identify her assailant, she, having been blindfolded at the time of the attack, picks out the wrong man, and the innocent stranger is consequently executed. As he is dying the girl starts to suspect the truth, and too late realises the identity of the real culprit. The villagers are now dimly aware that injustice

TRIAL : *The Stranger (William Martin) is brought to trial and wrongfully accused by the villagers. A dramatic moment in the second scene of Wright's ballet which gives an idea of Yolanda Sonnabend's excellent designs.*

A FOOL'S TALE: *The Princess (Antoinette Sibley) arrives at the court of the Prince (Derek Rencher, who also designed the ballet). A moment from Ray Powell's ballet.*

has been done, and at the end of the ballet they ostracise the now repentant criminal.

In this ballet Wright has used a fairly conventional classical idiom — in fact, the young girl's rôle was danced on half-point, but this was merely because the dancer in question had injured herself in rehearsal. The great merit of the choreography was in its unflagging vitality; there was an impressive flow here that was only partially disguised by the sheer weight of numbers Wright crowded upon his comparatively small stage. It seemed a mistake to use so large a *corps de ballet* (thirteen in all) for they gave a congested look to some of the group choreography.

The Villa-Lobos music proved a rewarding and intelligent choice, its pervasive rhythms providing the choreography with a strong basis, while at the same time supporting the tension of the theme. Yolanda Sonnabend, who has collaborated with Wright on his two previous major ballets, was notably successful with her non-realistic settings. Strangely textured shapes in earthy shades, whites and greys, helped to emphasise the non-specific anonymity of the theme's treatment, without detracting from its realism. The square-cut costumes, many of them appearing to be made of sack-cloth and using the same colour range as the settings, were on the whole less successful. The general production, particularly the lighting, was excellent, giving the ballet just the sense of swift compulsion it needed.

Wright had obviously chosen his cast with very considerable care, and the work was exceptionally well danced. The young Javanese dancer (she has a Dutch passport, but looks Japanese) Chesterina Sim Zecha, reinforced the strong impression she made at the Club's last programme, in Darrell's *Sound Barrier*. Here is a dancer of much more than usual talent, who moves with a rare eloquence. Both William Martin and John McDonald (dancers new to me — why?) danced with splendid virility in the leading male rôles and acted with real power. In a smaller part, young Nicholas Chagrin gave fresh evidence of his interesting and developing personality — he could easily become an individual dancer with something of that air of brooding, peasant aristocracy so impressive in Pirmin Trecu. These dancers, this choreographer, this designer, and even possibly this ballet, should be of interest to the powers that be in the British dance world.

A Fool's Tale

Choreography by Ray Powell. Music by Otmar Nussio. Scenery and Costumes by Derek Rencher.

The Fool ..... LAWRENCE RUFFEL
The Prince ..... DEREK RENCHER
The Princess ... ANTOINETTE SIBLEY
Ladies of the Court ... ANN HOWARD, JACQUELINE HASLAM, MARGARET LYONS, MAUREEN MAITLAND
Gentlemen of the Court ..... AUSTIN BENNETT, KENNETH MASON, CHRISTOPHER NEWTON, JOHN SALE

PERHAPS there ought to be a society to prevent choreographers from having to make second ballets, permitting them to get straight on with the third! Of course, to be strictly accurate *A Fool's Tale is* Ray Powell's third ballet, but his first — *Sweet Echo* — was produced so long ago that it can almost be disregarded, and this new ballet can be seen simply as a sequel to his notably successful *One in Five,* first produced for the Sunday Ballet Club last year. (Incidentally, *One in Five* has already been produced by Western Theatre Ballet, the Canadian National Ballet, by Richard Ellis's company in Chicago, and this summer is being danced by the Royal Ballet School at the Aldeburgh Festival.)

Unfortunately *A Fool's Tale* came as a distinct disappointment. It is difficult to put one's finger on precisely what went wrong, because I suspect the ballet's failure arose from a number of sources. The story, in the first place, was both weak and slick with clichés. The Young Princess is blind, and regains her sight when kissed by the Prince. This Oscar Wildeish reworking of *Beauty and the Beast* might just possibly have served, but Powell appears to have been uncertain as to exactly what attitude he was going to take up in treating it. Pathos, tragedy, even comedy at a pinch — it could have been treated in any of these ways — but Powell left it indecisively teetering between all three of them.

Partly as a result of this, and partly through the basic unsuitability of Otmar Nussio's music, the ballet lacked not so much structure — although it was ill-constructed — as backbone. It sagged like an etiolated plant deprived of the light and air it needs for nourishment. The choreography was a morass of exits and entrances, frantic comings and goings almost as pointless as the circulations of a cocktail party. The story-line came and went in fits and starts, and there was comparatively little scope for sustained passages of dancing.

The whole ballet seemed influenced, in many ways, by Cranko's *Prince of the Pagodas,* and at times it almost seemed like a somewhat uncertain digest version of the earlier ballet. For all its faults, which I have played up rather than down, *A Fool's Tale,* while "signifying nothing", nevertheless has its merits.

Powell knows how to use his dancers to good advantage, and is willing to make adventurous demands on them. Here and there were glints of his choreographic talent that would obviously have shone brighter in a less foredoomed ballet. He has an easy command of classical choreography, speaking the language naturally, often with a pleasingly colloquial flow. He has few choreographic inhibitions, and everything has a look of having been created off the cuff, which is a nice look for a ballet to have. When anyone is thrown from a horse, the wisest thing he can do is to get straight back in the saddle and try again. I hope Powell will very soon have an opportunity of doing just that.

There are few harder designing tasks than making a ballet look chic on the cheap; Bérard could do it, Fedorovitch could do it, and it is no great discredit to Derek Rencher to say that, as yet, he can't. His setting of swathed white net was a good idea in conception but too messy in execution. His costumes looked elegantly ornate but lacked personality, while in one instance, the costume for the Princess, was bad in movement and looked difficult to dance in. However, he is a promising designer, and his exclusive use of black, white and grey showed a discerning colour sense. Otmar Nussio's music proves on recollection to have been a little too unmemorable to criticise in detail. Nevertheless it was certainly undistinguished, unoriginal and took eclecticism to rather extreme lengths.

The ballet was cleanly danced by some of the brighter of the Royal Ballet's younger entry. Among the *ensemble* the boys were typically a good deal better than the girls, although Maureen Maitland showed an assured style. Antoinette Sibley acted well as the blind princess, and it was not her fault that moments of her "awakening" were made just a little too much like Coppélia's for comfort. Her dancing was as admirable as ever, while Derek Rencher made a noble and handsome prince. Probably the best opportunities for actual dancing went to Lawrence Ruffell, who accepted and exploited them with confidence.

Dance and Dancers . . . AT HOME

THE ROYAL BALLET
at Covent Garden

Assorted Beauties

GOING once more into the same breech, our dear friends the Royal Ballet turned up with *The Sleeping Beauty* on March 20, for the 345th time since the war. It took the Royal Danish Ballet almost precisely 167 years to notch up 350 performances of Galeotti's *Amors og Balletmesterens Luner,* and I sometimes find myself wondering whether we in England do not tend to overwork our classics. However, it is not for me to wonder why, and I was only talking in passing. This 345th performance (do you realise that at this rate in the year 2113 A.D. — 167 years after the first performance of *The Sleeping Beauty* at Covent Garden — the Royal Ballet will have performed it no less than 3,841 times, a figure that the Royal Danish Ballet, going at it in the half-hearted way they are now, cannot reasonably hope to reach with the Galeotti much before the year 3706 A.D., always providing the birds have not taken over by then?) was danced by Nadia Nerina and David Blair.

The performance was not in sober truth particularly distinguished. Nadia Nerina was at something less than her best form, and her over-conscientious acting was looking strangely disassociated from the rest of her performance. Blair made his usual ardently romantic Prince, but his choppy variation, with its dubious *double tours* straight, or rather almost straight, into *arabesque,* was (for him) just not good enough. The performance had a few other merits, which I will discuss with the rest of the casts next month.

The following night, March 21, Fonteyn reappeared as Aurora for the first time, I think, for close on two years, and certainly for the first time since Oliver Messel has biliously refurbished his décor and costumes, about which I make no comment. Fonteyn showed once more that she is still unquestionably *the* great Aurora of the Western world — and by this I mean rather more than merely that she is the greatest in this particular ballet, but also that she is the greatest in this particular *type* of ballet. Having said this, it seems ungrateful to suggest that I have seen her better, but the sad fact is that I thought her dancing perhaps for the first time was showing the first cracks of strain. It would be easy to make too much of this, equally it would be unfair to her reputation not to mention it. Her artistry, of course, was unscathed, and her characterisation — from princess to bride — proved as true and telling as ever. Perhaps her smile needed more radiance and less dazzle, but that was all. Fonteyn is not above criticism, merely beyond it.

Michael Somes as Florimund presented something of a problem. His princely air is splendid, while his partnering shows a perfect sympathy for Fonteyn, although his lifting is in no way remarkable. Unfortunately his dancing has lost much of its *brio* and a sense of effort detracts from his phrasing. In some respects, however, he still makes a magnificent match for Fonteyn, and although now past his peak as a dancer, his manliness and simplicity remain exemplary.

The following night, March 22, Svetlana Beriosova and Donald MacLeary reappeared in the ballet, but as I unfortunately had to miss this performance, comment on this pair will have to wait until next month. On Saturday, April 8, the two junior ballerinas came into the ballet, with Annette Page in the afternoon and Anya Linden in the evening. Linden is a lovely looking dancer, with that curious quality that we can only hint at when we say she has "star appeal". Add to this a thoroughbred classic grace, and an intelligent aptitude for careful characterisation, and the total should add up to something very impressive. Unfortunately Linden's performances are not always the sum of her qualities, even though she is often a surprising dancer. This Aurora was neatly acted and nicely danced, but I was too much aware of her failure to let her dancing flow out with the music. Her line is good, only being marred by one or two slight affectations with her fingers, and she has developed more assurance than she had in the past. Desmond Doyle made her an excellent partner. Both his acting and dancing were good, while his partnering had a fine gleaming polish. I liked very much his one-handed flourish to the end of the last act *pas de deux.*

Annette Page and Ronald Hynd (who had their press show in the ballet on May 4) have also developed and improved their performances over the past few seasons. Perhaps their most notable quality is the instinctive sympathy, musical and emotional, with which they dance together. Page has a gentle, wide-eyed charm, but her always musical dancing needs more breadth and grandeur. Technically she is most accomplished, although she would do well to distribute the strain she now concentrates in her neck muscles, which gives her a slight stiffness around the head and shoulders. A little conscious relaxation would help here. On a point of detail, she must be very careful not to over-stress her most impressive balances in the Rose Adagio. On her press night she wrecked an otherwise excellent account of the dance by standing too long on one leg — by all means show off your *équilibre,* but do not do it at the expense of the music. Fonteyn must be the pattern here. Hynd makes a noble cavalier, breathing aristocracy like fire from his nostrils. He can and does get away with a far more flamboyant style of acting than the rest of the company, but he never indulges in pointless, ornamental gestures for their own sake. His partnering is sound rather than brilliant, and his dancing represents an intelligent appraisal of the things he does best, which enables him to make a better impression in his variation than dancers who are technically stronger. What his dancing does have, and has to a great degree, is a naturalness and buoyancy that can give a virtuoso air to the most unassuming *jeté.* **C. B.**

The rest of the cast and the performance of Beriosova and MacLeary will be reviewed next month.

Merle Park's Swanilda

MERLE PARK used to accept the authorised version of *Coppélia.* But at the performance on May 8 she pushed it around, relentless in her efforts to reduce Swanilda's every action to dramatic logic. Coherence runs through the new interpretation, and yet for no especially clear-sighted reason hers is not a performance I care to defend. But, generally speaking, the changes she makes are seldom of such quality that they transfigure the character entirely. Take the coming-to-life passage in Act 2 where she is impersonating the doll. Quite correctly, she guys this, though few other dancers have dared to do so.

I have grown so idiotically fond of certain illogicalities in ballet that I find it hard to accept a Swanilda who does not step out of the plot's framework to suggest that really beautiful moment when she sees the world around her for the first time. Her dancing is admirable, notably strong on turns, and quite furiously musical throughout — but would not more *rubato,* especially in her *ports de bras,* lend a surer touch of ballerina distinction? Anyway, her interpretation is boisterous rather than mischievious, and naturalistic and robust in comedy rather than witty or sophisticated. Her eyes are like saucers, she is forever smothering rude explosions of giggles, and she features a nice range of Lady Teazle sausage curls in the first two acts. Furthermore, she marshals her six friends around her with the air of a teenage gang-leader.

Deputising for Gilpin at short notice, Graham Usher was at an obvious disadvantage. His dancing was extremely smooth; his acting less tense than formerly but surely still too reticent to carry his Franz very far in the Opera House. Leslie Edwards was an admirably average Coppélius, who stalked through the action with a persecuted look over the shoulder, and plied Swanilda with doses of supernatural mumbo-jumbo not altogether sure that the recipe would work.

Finally, I must thank the *corps* for entertaining us during the Aurora and Prayer *variations.* Those sly looks and winks at at each other suggest that bets may have been placed. Georgina Parkinson was a somewhat shrill Aurora, and Deanne Bersgma a most promising Prayer, though she had twinges of the usual supporting leg trouble when transferring from *effacé* to *arabesque.* **E. C. M.**

Touch of Greatness

BERIOSOVA has never been less than an interesting dancer, and in her early days as a child prodigy she was fascinating. Then we had her first brilliant Swanilda, and all the tremulous, tremendous, yet veiled promise of her early — and so gently discreet — battles with the classic ballerina rôles, the awakening awareness of her first Ashton creation in *Rinaldo and Armida* (how strange that Ashton has yet to create for her again!), the submerged excitements of her Belle Rose in Cranko's *Prince of the Pagodas,* the mounting authority of her assumption of Fonteyn's rôles in *Cinderella* and *Ondine.* The years leading up to Beriosova's maturity have been rewarding, but now, I think, that maturity is in sight.

On April 13, I went along to Covent Garden to see cast changes in *Le Baiser de la Fée, Les Patineurs* and *Antigone.* But the most notable cast change of all was the new depth Beriosova was bringing to MacMillan's Fairy and Cranko's tragic heroine. She swept through MacMillan's ballet (which, incidentally, I like more and more, having forgotten its structural faults in my admiration for so much of its choreography) like the avenging spirit of genius, while to Cranko's Theban Wars she brought tragedy whereas before she

had brought pathos. In both of these ballets her dancing had a touch of greatness.

In *Baiser de la Fée* we had a new Fiancée in Merle Park, followed the next night by another newcomer in the rôle, Antoinette Sibley. Park gave the appearance of being a jolly and sensible girl, but looking unlikely to cry over spilt milk. It was a conception of the rôle that looked to me quite outside MacMillan's ballet and Stravinsky's allegory, although it was well enough danced. Sibley the following night came as a complete surprise, because I have never thought of her as an actress, possibly for the very good reason that she has never had much opportunity to act. In this she was tender, moving and completely enchanting. Quite different from Seymour, she is a lighter, brighter, shallower girl at the beginning, but these very qualities gave an added poignancy to her final bereavement, when she went searching for her love like a trampled Spring flower. I have no space to more than mention MacLeary, who was dancing with immense zest and sensitivity. This is his part.

Graham Usher's first appearance in London as the Blue Skater was more of a notable event than a memorable performance. His dancing was always clean and often invigorating, and he showed a perky humour that missed the wit of Turner and Shaw. Technically, apart from a flubbed finale, the part was naturally well within his range, and he will obviously give better performances in the future. Lorrayne and Rencher made an engaging White Couple, although without the scintillating smoothness of Park and MacLeary. Moncur was a capable newcomer among the Blue Girls.

The length, manner and crude violence of Cranko's *Antigone* is not to everyone's taste, and the settings, and even more particularly the costumes of that fine artist Tamayo, strike me as more disastrous every time I see the ballet. Yet I find this bird's eye view of the Theban Wars, with its stylised choreography all in neo-expressionist blocks and friezes, solidly impressive. With the strengthening of Beriosova's own performance as Antigone, the ballet now has a better focus than before, and David Blair and Gary Burne continue to be excellent as the warring, demon brothers. Ronald Hynd's self-consciously insinuating manner as Creon still proves no substitute for the king-making hypocrisy of Somes in the same part. Gerd Larsen, a newcomer to the rôle of Jocasta, had insufficient passion.

C. B.

Russian Rehearsals ?

IT would seem that the programme put on at Covent Garden on April 19 amounted to some kind of rehearsal for the Royal Ballet's Russian tour. Certainly the three works shown — *The Firebird, Les Patineurs* and *The Lady and the Fool* — are all going there, but except for a few instances I can only hope it is not the way they are going to be given in the Soviet Union.

Take *The Firebird,* for instance. Well, it makes one of the worst opening ballets ever, but this hardly excuses the performance it got. When Fonteyn, Somes and Beriosova danced this when the Royal Ballet first revived this stirring Fokine/Stravinsky fairy tale, it had magic, real magic. As given on this particular occasion with Nerina, Blair and Vyvyan Lorrayne, the mechanism of every trick was all too obvious — no magic at all.

Nerina's Firebird once had promise of greatness and her elevation caused her to skim and soar above the earth's surface. Well, her elevation is still there and so is her technique, but unfortunately in Fokine ballets this is never quite enough. The secret lies in the complex artistry of interpretation, which is why Karsavina, Bolm and all those others have become the immortals that they have. Nerina's performance now has little meaning, no light and shade and leans heavily towards vulgarity.

Excuses can be made for David Blair as Ivan Tsarevitch, it was his first shot at the part. He made a brash prince and although it calls for a decided peasant approach, one which Michael Somes manages magnificently, this was not quite the right sort of brashness. He never seemed to believe fully in the rôle and was far too conscious of the audience. But all these things will doubtless be put right with time, though whether they can be put right by Russian time is another matter.

Nor can much fault be found basically with what Vyvyan Lorrayne made of the Tsarevna — it was workmanlike without ever being surrounded by that aura of majesty which is what made Beriosova's performance so remarkable. The art of stillness on the stage is one of the most difficult of the theatre's arts to master — the stillness that rivets the audience. Lorrayne, in that long final scene, remained still all right but my attention wandered.

The best performance came from Franklin White as Kostchei, evil dripping from every pore and from the *corps de ballet* though even they sometimes gave the listless air of having danced the ballet twice daily over a long period.

The centre-piece of this programme came with John Gilpin's first appearance with the Royal Ballet in Ashton's *Les Patineurs,* and this was the only reason I can see for putting this work in such a programme-position — surely it is an "opener" or "closer" if ever there was one. It is sad to relate that this and his performance in the same ballet on the following evening were all that he could manage this season — a back injury made it necessary for him to cancel all his other appearances at Covent Garden and also on the smaller company's provincial tour.

The rôle of the Blue Skater is a tricky one as although a virtuoso technique is essential it is also a matter of punctuation and emphasis in certain places, which took both Harold Turner and Brian Shaw, the part's two finest interpreters, a number of years to perfect. It was not to be expected that Gilpin would master this immediately and, of course, he didn't. Nor, quite honestly, did he look entirely at home with the ballet, though it is possible to see now that the slight sense of strain came from more than first-night nerves. However, through this, his refinement and elegance managed to make a number of appearances and, of course, he turned beautifully. Reliable report informs me that by the second performance he was relaxed and nearly back to his old form which, had fate not played so unkind a trick, would have doubtless later brought honour to himself and the Royal Ballet in his other scheduled rôles.

Of the home team Merle Park and Donald MacLeary glided gracefully and with great distinction through the White *pas de deux,* while Maryon Lane and Annette Page spun themselves to house-bringing-down applause in the finale, and the whole ballet was danced with spirit by everyone.

Always assuming, as I do, that all professionals know just what they are doing, I can only assume that *The Lady and the Fool* is *really* the right thing to take to Russia. Mr. Krushchev once expressed great enthusiasm for it and that should be a fairly reliable pointer, but me, I find it a corny old bit of ham. However, there are compensations and on this evening it had a radiance on account of Beriosova's La Capricciosa. She was glorious and so beautiful that it was hard to imagine that the guests in Signor Midas's Roman society brothel — an early form of *Dolce Vita* — could have turned so nasty on such a ravishing creature. The sweep of her dancing somehow brushes away all the improbabilities of the story. She was well-supported, very literally, by her three wealthy suitors — Signor Midas (David Blair), Capitano Adoncino (David Drew) and the Prince of Arroganza (Donald MacLeary) who were all very stylish. The newcomers to their rôles, Drew and MacLeary proved excellent in their respective ways — the former is virile and manly and brought more credibility to the part than his predecessors. MacLeary's Prince of Arroganza has been whittled down until there is no variation at all; a pity as his noble demeanour suggested that he might have been able to make something of a solo which though no great shakes as far as choreography is concerned at least gives life to the character.

The two clowns, Moondog (Ronald Hynd) and Bootface (Ray Powell), have lost the thread of their rôles somewhere along the line which is surprising when you think that both are fine and intelligent artists. Hynd has mislaid his tenderness and Powell has lost his pathos, while both are exaggerating. I feel they should have taken a long look at Marcel Marceau in order to get the essence of the natural history of clowns. The colours of all the costumes are so hideous that the theft of my sun glasses from my car now seems to me a crime of major proportions.

P. W.

THE POLISH DANCE COMPANY, "SLASK"

DO you remember the old days when we used to have visiting ballet companies to London? Now it seems we get nothing but folk-dance troupes, although with the Kirov Ballet just round the corner perhaps we should count our blessings. The Polish State Dance Company, "Slask," which opened a season at the Coliseum on March 27, is probably among the best national groups to visit us since the war. But, but, but, why do these folk dance troupes, or rather the people who present them, imagine that we want those interminable episodes of folk singing? It is bad enough, with all respect, when they sing their own songs full of peasant vigour and rustic charm, but when they sing — as, if memory serves, they almost all do — that fine old British ballad, "My bonny lies over the ocean", boredom plumbs such depths that it becomes an almost emotional experience.

However, even the singers had an unaffected charm and warm friendliness, while the dancers proved worthy inheritors of Poland's ancient dance tradition. In the stately mazurkas, vigorous polonaises and handkerchief dances, as well as in the exciting *Oberek,* where the men go flying over the women's shoulders, the zestful dancing of the company made a fine impression. There were two virtuoso character dancers, Barbara Brandt and Michal Jarczyk, who had that particular sort of controlled brilliance we more usually associate with ballet dancers than national dance troupes. But to a lesser degree this control and technical finish was a feature of the com-

pany, which, while not perhaps more exciting than the famous "Mazowsze" group who came to London four years ago, definitely had its own merits. Perhaps the programme lacked generally something of that elemental virtuosity that can make folk dancing so invigorating. Yet this element at least found a belated place in the show's finale, when the company gave their "Tatra Mountain Dances", superb alike in their technical emboidery and athletic punch.

Certainly this "Slask" troupe will be as welcome to London again as the "Mazowsze". But please, when they come next time, let us have a little less of the choral singing and a little more of the dancing.

C. B.

MARCEL MARCEAU

THE first night of Marcel Marceau's season at the Saville on April 7 was one of those rare occasions when critics were compelled to scrutinise their threadbare supply of superlatives in search of words apt for the magnitude of the experience. Memories had to be frantically racked for comparisons — but, here, the only artists of adequate stature to emerge were Chaplin and the late Ruth Draper. The first night was not sold out. Yet the following morning's notices were so unanimously enthusiastic that ticket sales rocketed, producing, I'm told, a sell-out season.

When last seen — at the Cambridge, October 14, 1957 — with his company, you may recall that some critics suggested that his invention flagged in more ambitious works. There were no such reservations this time. In fact, alone, on an empty stage — or almost alone, for Pierre Verry was his "presenter of cards" — he seemed better than ever. Better at making the invisible visible — such as the *trompe l'oeil* of the Billposter's wall or Porcelain Seller's enormous vases. He was less ambiguous and stronger technically — note his controlled backbends in the Porcelain Seller.

This wisp of a man in a loose white costume, with white basic make-up and bushy sideburns, is capable of the most minute observation and creative comment. In his *exercises de style* it is easy to appreciate all the principal points. For example, in the *Walk in the Water,* a superb technical feat, he became both impeded and visibly more buoyant, the deeper the water became. As the Tightrope Walker, with quaking legs, even though he was firmly on the ground, was he not more exciting than the genuine article? Moreover, when he climbed an endless—of course, invisible — ladder and suffered vertigo, one's heart leapt to one's mouth.

However, as the evening progresses he frees himself little by little from the literalism of the *exercises* and more and more flights of fantasy become possible. One's imagination is stretched, and disbelief is suspended in an eagerness to believe, with little conscious feeling of having to concentrate. His powers of transition are seemingly inexhaustible. Like so many bubbles bursting in the air he rapidly peoples his *Jardin public* with a statue, nursemaids, gossips, citizens airing dogs, a priest, children, a street-sweeper, a balloon seller and lovers. It is in this item, of course, that his talents are most closely akin to Ruth Draper's: she filled the stage with characters of her imagination in speech; he does the same in silent gesture. Once again he changed his stride to a trudge as he went through *Youth, Maturity, Old Age, Death,* moving slower and slower until he withered into death.

But perhaps Marceau's audience prefers to see him grappling with situations they themselves have experienced. His character, Bip, whether he be sculptor, servile salesman, or mirth-provoking lion-tamer, provides moments where they can identify themselves sufficiently. An example of this is his attempt at putting on tight gloves before suffering various humiliations and delights at a *High* (he is just back from America!) Society Party. Finally, there is the *Maker of Masks,* which is truly Pirandellian in its irony. After frivolously alternating tragedy and comedy masks, he is almost permanently imprisoned in a circus clown's idiotic grin, behind which can be seen a limply despairing body.

In an interview with a Special Correspondent of *The Times* (April 20), Marceau asserted that mime is an art form in its own right — "not *without* anything". It is not dance without music, and neither is it "drama without words, but drama in silence, drama of silence". But perhaps many would prefer to think of him as a poet of silences?

E. C. M.

NEXT MONTH: The remainder of the Royal Ballet season. Festival Ballet in Brighton. The Indian dance programme — Bhatatha Natyalaya.

Dance and Dancers . . . . . ABROAD

FRANCE

THE PARIS OPERA

BECAUSE of the strike of singers, a situation which lasted six weeks, the ballet programmes have had to alternate with concerts. But they have been affected also, and sometimes the actual repertoire, in the absence of announced revivals, seems very meagre. Apart from *Lac des Cygnes,* which has three alternate sets of principals, we have best been able to admire Peter Van Dijk in *Les Sylphides* and *Noces fantastiques.* Josette Amiel, however, has interpreted *Giselle* with a sure sense of the Romantic style, though Flemming Flindt who supports her lacks stage presence. The rôle of Albrecht, which requires a highly developed expressive style, does not seem to suit him. On the other hand, he is more relaxed and consequently seen to better advantage in Balanchine's *Palais de Cristal.* A poetic Queen of the Wilis in *Giselle,* Jacqueline Rayet has portrayed with much charm the Tsarevna in Lifar's version of *The Firebird,* in which George Skibine and Marjorie Tallchief dance the rôles of the Tsarevitch and Firebird.

THE OPERA-COMIQUE

WHILE Jacqueline Rayet was giving an outstanding performance in the revival of Balanchine's *Symphonie* at the Opéra, the Opéra-Comique staged *Marines* on March 17. With *Concerto* and *Ombres lunaires,* this became the third André Jolivet score to which George Skibine has created the choreography. In fact, as its title indicates, Jolivet's *Second Concerto for Trumpet* has suggested itself to Skibine as suitable for a series of seascapes in the manner of *Train-Bleu.* A young couple depict the solo instrument while the *corps de ballet* takes the rôle of the orchestra. But it is not the choreography, which is thin and, apart from a few lifts, lacking in originality, that arouses interest. This little work's attractions tend to lie partly in the dancing and partly in its décor. Radiant with the health of youth, Claire Motte and Attilio Labis make a convincing pair of lovers, while, once again, Bernard Daydé has captured the right atmosphere with the most simple means. Fluttering sails are slowly hoisted against an azure background, while rows of multi-coloured lanterns light up the night.

THE THEATRE DES NATIONS

THE fifth season of the Théâtre des Nations started at the Théâtre des Champs Elyesées on April 7 with the Berlin Opera's production of Schönberg's *Moïse et Aaron.* This rather austere and unfinished serial composition presents extra difficulties from the point of view of production. Moses, a speaking part has to be integrated with the music. But one can only praise this substantial work, the quality of its musical performance, and Gustav Rudolf Sellner's production which is in perfect accord with Michel Raffaelli's decorative elements and lighting plot. In the second act, the Adoration of the Golden Lamb allows Dore Hoyer the opportunity to choreograph a dance interlude which though modern in style does not altogether reject the classical vocabulary. The most interesting part of the choreography, however, is the Sacrificial Dance. The dodecaphonic score, stumbling along in short phrases, barely suggests in effect the atmosphere of an orgy. In contrast, the movements of the dancers are more or less erotic. Though produced with discretion, they too often strive in vain to connect the music.

ON April 9, the Berlin Opera Ballet made its début at the Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt. *Paean,* choreographed by Tatiana Gzovsky to an electronic score by Rémi Gassman and Oscar Sala, began the evening. This *avant-garde* work attempts to trace the whole course of human life, an ambitious theme too delicate to realise. The young Klauss Belitz interprets the rôle of the Young Man, travelling from infancy through adolescent love, becoming player and warrior, until he is deceived in the end by life and brought peace by death. Surrounded by warriors and heroes (the soloists and dancers of the company), Gisela Deege as the Woman showed authority and mastery.

Extracts from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* allowed Yvette Chauviré, absent too long from the Paris stage, to make a warm return. Over the harsh fragmentation of this admirable score and "digest" treatment of Shakespare's plot, the ballerina was able to impose a childlike charm and ardour, and the final despair of Juliet upon the work. Intelligent, remarkably sensitive, she managed to bring many moving nuances to the work despite the fact that the banal choreography scarcely gave her any encouragement. Her partner, Gerd Reinholm, only deserves notice for his prowess at lifting and beautiful physique.

In Boris Blacher's version of *Hamlet,* however, Reinholm had greater scope. On first hearing, the score seems interesting, though Tatiana Gzovsky's choreography lacks ease, lightness and smoothness, and

is generally poor in *enchaînements.* The too-frequent curtains and the dimly-lit stage rob the work of both atmosphere and cohesion, while the development of the action remains too literally word-for-word. Paul Seltenhammer's costumes lack all sense of dramatic credibility and visual harmony. Why is Hamlet in a Romantic doublet? Why should the Queen, dressed in rose velvet, suggest a music-hall vamp? And why the "playing-card" King and the corpse-like Gravedigger? Yet, despite its lapses of taste, the company is attempting serious and interesting work.

Marie-Françoise Christout.

AMERICA

American Ballet Theatre on Broadway

continued from page 19

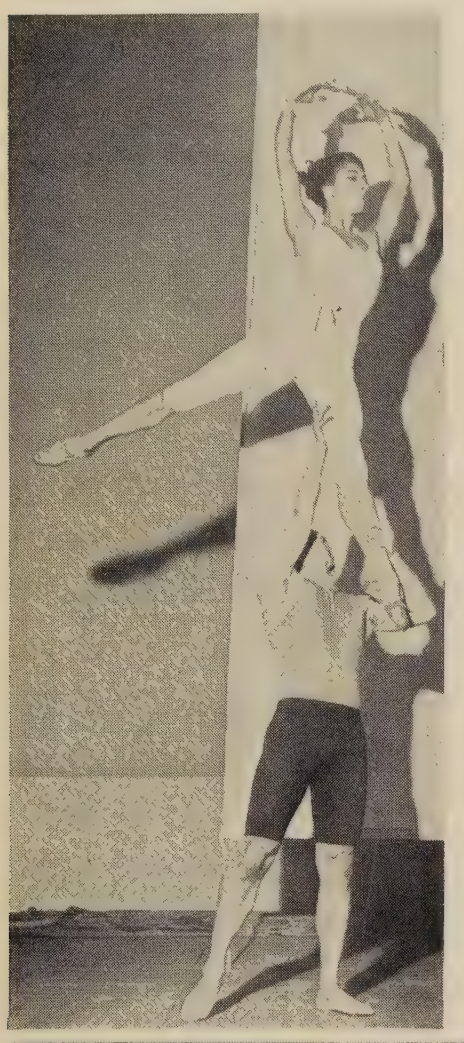
world to make it worthwhile save the dancing facility of Scott Douglas and Sallie Wilson. The reminiscent music was composed by Dave Brubeck, orchestrated by Howard Brubeck, and the quite ordinary costumes were by Helene Pons, and all three, as well as the management, should be ashamed of themselves for being caught up in such a collection of worthless ideas and pointless choreography. Before we forget it, the plot, briefly, was Boy meets Girl, Boy loses Girl, Boy gets Girl. Perhaps this most recent experiment in trying to combine ballet with jazz may make other choreographers beware in the future, for we have already had too many jazz ballets this season.

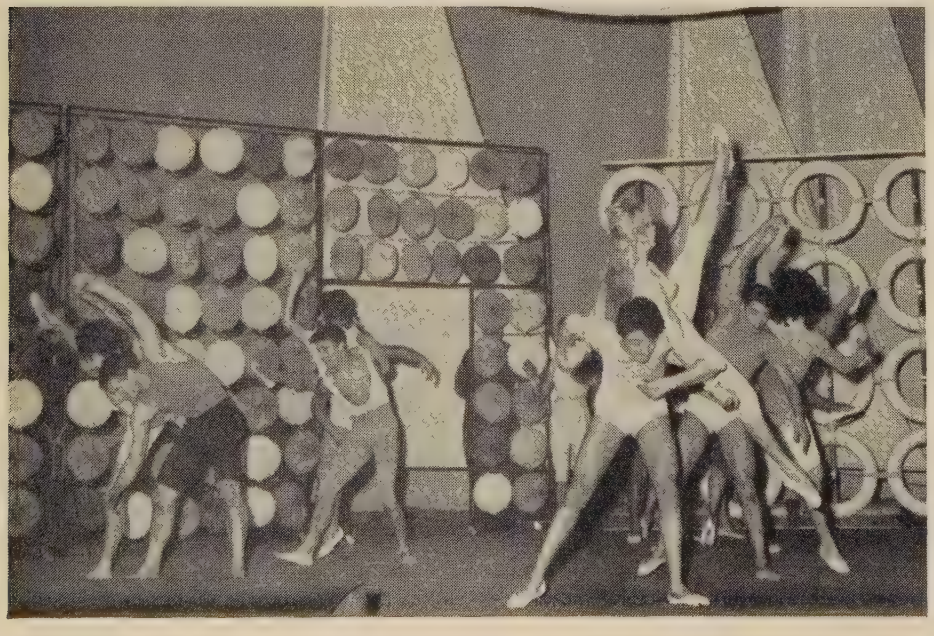
The season, of course, had many other points of interest. One of the chief of these was Lupe Serrano's *Black Swan pas de deux* (in which she was excellently partnered by Scott Douglas), one of the greatest pieces of dancing of the entire season, and one can see why she created such a furore in Russia. What's more important is the fact that she has also grown steadily as an artist. Though she has not yet conquered the first act of *Giselle,* she danced magnificently in the second act, which is now programmed as being staged "after Chabukiani", and a very interesting version this is in points of view of dramatic line and choreography for the *corps de ballet.* Royes Fernandez made a young and handsome Count Albrecht and Toni Lander was a brilliant Myrtha.

It goes without saying, literally, that Maria Tallchief and Erik Bruhn are among the world's greatest dancers, and their respective personalities and dance styles complement each other admirably. Although I found that Tallchief tends to over-play in her new dramatic rôles (especially in *Miss Julie* and *Lady from the Sea),* she was completely stunning in *Swan Lake,* the *Grand Pas-Glazounov* and the various *pas de deux.* Erik Bruhn continues as one of the great male classical dancers of our time, even in such a thankless rôle as the male dancer in *Les Sylphides,* but it seemed to me that his acting in such rôles as the butler, Jean, in *Miss Julie,* came close to over-playing, but this, perhaps, was in compensation to his new partner in the rôle.

Two old favourites in the repertoire — *Billy the Kid* and *Rodeo* — are in considerably better condition than when performed here last year. And Fernand Nault's re-staging of the one-act *Swan Lake,* obviously Russian-inspired, was all to the good as far as choreographic improvement was concerned.

Last but not least, there are several young dancers who made a marked impression during the season. These included Susan Borree, Felix Smith, Elisabeth Carroll, Audre Decmann and Kent Hatcher.





MARINES: *Two scenes from George Skibine's new ballet for the Opèra Comique in Paris. Claire Motte, who was the principal dancer, is seen in a* pas de deux *on the left. Below, the* corps *in Bernard Daydé's setting. Photos: Lido.*

MOISEYEV BOUNCES BACK

IMPRESARIO S. Hurok brought the Moiseyev Dance Company from Moscow back to New York in mid-April for a three-week engagement at the Metropolitan Opera House, prior to its tour of the major cities of the U.S. and Canada. At its première, the company drew a rousing welcome from a very gala audience, and deservedly so this time, for they brought both younger and more vital dancers and a much finer repertoire. Though I by no means was completely taken by them on their first visit, I must now eat my former words because I thought them extraordinarily exciting in their current engagement.

In the first place, I found that Igor Moiseyev had a considerably broader and more rounded repertoire. This time he has drawn upon folk materials from such diverse areas as the Ukraine, Bessarabia, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Moldavia, the North Caucasus, Uzbekistan, the Mongol Kalmuks, as well as Russia itself. As John Martin put it so well in the *New York Times,* "This is dancing of, by, about and for the people." Secondly, I found the performers, perhaps because they were considerably younger than the first group that visited us in 1958, far more technically versatile. They are volatile, mercurial, dynamic and couldn't possibly be anything else than dancers.

The ten new numbers were headed by *The Snow Maiden,* a choreographic fairy tale that reminded me very much of a mixture of *The Nutcracker* and a Christmas pantomime. After that, the dancing really got going with such new numbers as *Kalmuk Dance, Briul,* a Moldavian folk dance; *The Platter,* a spinning, whirling Uzbekistan dance; *The Three Shepherds,* an Azerbaijan dance; *Makanou, the Mischief-Maker,* another Moldavian folk dance; *Venzelya,* a Russian reel; *Suburban Idyll,* from the suite, *Pictures of the Past*; *Summer,* from the suite, *The Seasons.* Familiar numbers returned for this second tour included *The Gopak, The Gypsies, Over the Legs,* an Estonian Polka, and, of course, *The Partisans.*

Only two things annoyed me about this otherwise marvellous evening. One was the foisting upon us again of *The Partisans,*

RUSSIAN ROCK : Soloists of the Moiseyev Dance Company, Tamara Golovanova and Lev Golovanov, in the "Rock 'n' Roll" number which they gave with such enormous success when the company gave its recent season at the Metropolitan Opera House.

a purely propaganda and blood-curdling piece if I ever saw one. What amused me about this, however, was the fact that the Russians felt it "safe" to show us such violence a second time after they refused to let American Ballet Theatre present either *Fall River Legend* or *Billy the Kid* in Russia because some officials there felt these American ballets were "decadent and dangerous". Secondly, though I admire colourful dance costumes on stage, I found some of the Moiseyev's too vibrant in colour, oftentimes clashing horribly, also too spangled, sequined and tinselled for our tastes.

These objections, however, were more than compensated for by the "Surprise Encore", which was one of the most hilarious exhibitions of jitter-bugging ever to be seen on a New York stage. And how these uninhibited Russian dancers let themselves go! Obviously, they were enjoying it all as much as the audience did. Certainly, if Russian audiences adore this, as they do, they would go mad over *West Side Story* and Jerome Robbins' Ballets: U.S.A., because each has the same verve and vitality.

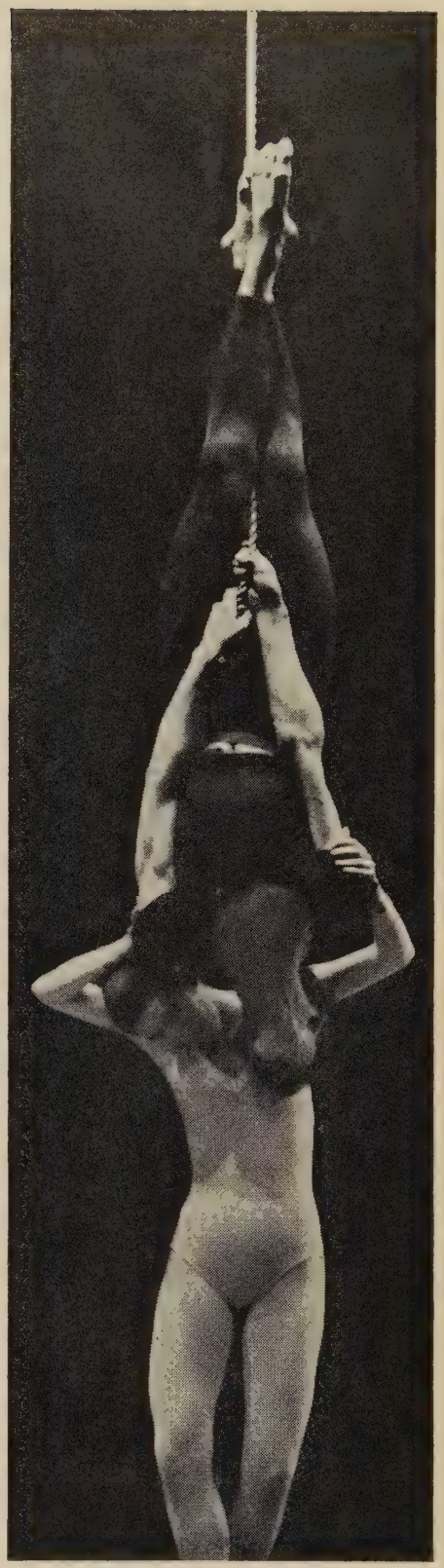
DANCING AT JUILLIARD

WHEN the Juilliard School of Music recently offered its "Two Evenings of Dance" programme, with José Limón as production director, the major new work presented was Limón's *Performance,* subtitled "Over the Footlights and Back", in which current members and alumni of the dance ensemble appeared. The music for this work was commissioned by the School and included Variations on a Theme of William Schuman by Hugh Aitken, William Bergsma, Jacob Druckman, Vittorio Gianini, Norman Lloyd, Vincent Persichetti, Robert Starer and Hugo Weisgall.

The 12 variations carried such titles as *In the Aisles,* where 14 dancers cavorted in aisle seats, up, down and around their chairs and thence up and down the aisle to take over the stage. There they continued a *Dialogue with Orchestra, Pursued and Pursuers, Dance for Jumping into a Pit, The Lovers, An Assassination, On the Fringes of a Ball, The Drunkards, A Proclamation, Interlude for the Indecent, Tarantella, Dance for Being Tossed in a Blanket,* and then, mercifully, a *Finale.* All of this might have seemed fresher and diverting if it had been shortened by half. Quite obviously, José Limón is out of his element in comic invention and, at times, gave the impression that he had mounted a Jerome Robbins' idea that was put on like a high school performance. Although I was embarrassed for him and the dancers as well, I must add that I greatly admired Ann Vachon and Koert Stuyf in *The Lovers,* in which they performed a touching and eloquent *pas de deux* vertically, for the most part, on a hanging rope. Too, I admired the dancing prowess of Koert Stuyf and the men of the ensemble in *An Assassination.* As for the music itself, I must admit that I was not able to ascertain the theme until after the fifth variation, and, from then on, only intermittently. Though the audience received this work rapturously, I can only say that I was depressed that Limón, the distinguished group of composers, and some of the obviously talented dancers, could not have brought forth something of greater stature and import.

BALLETS : U.S.A. FOR EUROPEAN TOUR

JEROME ROBBINS' "Ballets: U.S.A." starts its three-month European tour on July 12, where it will be giving seven performances at Spoleto, Italy, at the Festival of Two Worlds, before proceeding to Paris, where it will perform from July 19 through 29 at the Théâtre des Nations as part of the Paris Festival. Subsequent engagements are slated for London (during late August), Copenhagen, Berlin, Ham-



PERFORMANCE : *Ann Vachon and Koert Stuyf in "The Lovers" episode from José Limón's new work at the Juilliard School of Music, New York.*

Photo : Radford Bascome

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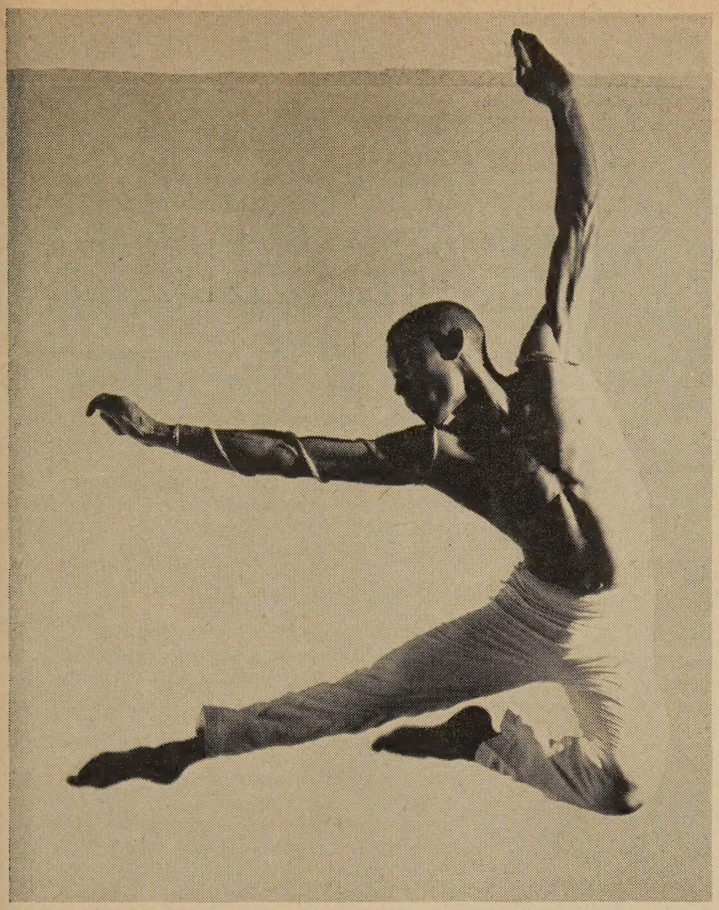
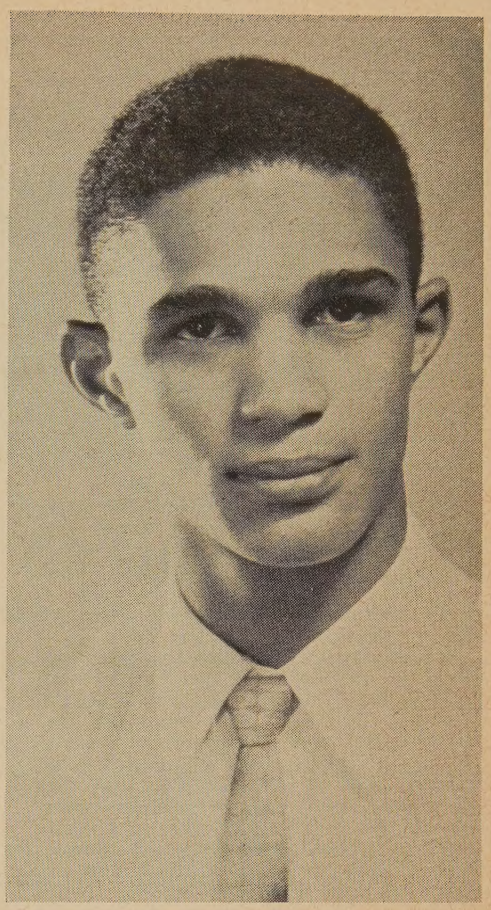


JAMAICAN DANCERS WITH GRAHAM EDWARD THOMAS (left): This dancer, now with the Graham company, is not only a notable dancer but is also a choreographer, composer and designer. He created a number of works in his native country.

CLIVE THOMPSON (right): This dancer, who started at an early age, was chosen to dance before members of the British Royal Family and has also been granted Jamaican government awards for his contribution to West Indian dance.

Photos: Amador Packer.



burg, Munich and other cities to be announced.

Robbins, who will travel with the company on its tour, is creating two new works which will have their première in Spoleto. One, *Events,* has an especially commissioned score by Robert Prince, who was the composer of *N.Y. Export, Opus Jazz.* The other, which the choreographer terms a "ballet ballet", is to be called *Variations,* and will have music by Tchaikovsky. The all-Robbins repertoire will retain *Afternoon of a Faun, The Concert, Interplay, New York Export, Opus Jazz* and *Moves,* which is performed without musical accompaniment.

Dancers who have rejoined the company for its third international tour include Jamie Bauer, Muriel Bentley, Patricia Dunn, Erin Martin, Christine Mayer, Helena Petroff, Lawrence Gradus, John Jones, William Reilly and Douglas Soingler. New to the company will be Scott Douglas and Glen Tetley, leading dancers of American Ballet Theatre, as well as Veronica Mlakar, Roberta Lubell, Susan Borree, Kay Mazzo, Charlene Mehl, Richard Gain, Howard Jeffery, Bob Thompson and Edward Verso.

WEST SIDE STORY SEEKS U.S. SUBSIDY

THE U.S. State Department, which previously rejected the request of the original producers of Jerome Robbins' *West Side Story* to give performances in Russia due to the fact that this musical "dwelt on an unflavoursome aspect of American life", has again been asked to sponsor a tour to Russia and Poland by the company that is now having such a great success in Europe. Heath Bowman, chief of the U.S. State Department's cultural presentations division, questions the fact that this musical is "the proper thing to show behind the Iron Curtain". However, if the American Government turns down this sponsorship, it now appears more than likely that the co-leasees of this musical, who are Giora Godik and Pete Kameron, may take the production to Poland and Russia on their own.

NOTED JAMAICAN DANCERS JOIN GRAHAM

CLIVE D. THOMPSON and Edward Thomas, both born and trained in the British West Indies, who have not yet completed their first year with the Martha Graham School, made most auspicious débuts with the Martha Graham Company during its recent season at the 54th Street Theatre, N.Y., as noted elsewhere in this issue.

Edward Thomas, who received the first travel award made to a Jamaican dancer from the Government of Jamaica, came to the United States to study at the Martha Graham School in June 1960. He received a scholarship at Connecticut College School of the Dance in the summer of 1960 and, on return to the Graham School in August, was granted a full scholarship for study there. While in Jamaica, Edward Thomas studied music and painting in school and started formal training with the Ivy Baxter Dance Group in 1953, when he was 21 years old. He danced one of the leading rôles in the folk ballet, *Village Scene,* presented before Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, on her official visit to the Island. He also composed the music and designed the sets for the first Jamaican full-length ballet, *Rat Passage,* and for *New Horizons,* which was chosen to open the West Indies Festival of Arts in Trinidad in 1958. He also created the choreography, music and costumes for *Triangle* and *Basket Mento,* two works in the repertory of the Baxter Group. He has studied ballet, folk and modern primitive dance forms, attending several summer sessions offered by the University College of the West Indies. In 1958, Edward Thomas started a Dance Workshop to experiment on new forms and, since then, this has grown into a dance studio where ballet, modern dance and jazz are taught.

Clive Thompson, on the other hand, started dancing at the age of 11, in 1947, as a male member of a team with his sister. However, he became seriously interested in the dance after viewing a performance of the Ivy Baxter Creative Dance Group and joined the Ivy Baxter School that same year. In addition to appearing in Madame May Soohih's production of *Magic Lake* and Ivy Baxter's *Seaweed,* Clive Thompson was selected to represent Jamaica at the Federal Festival of Arts in Trinidad in 1958. He also performed before Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, and Prince Philip in 1953, and for Her Royal Highness, Princess Margaret, in 1954, and again in 1958. He was also granted Government awards in 1956 and 1957 for Choreography, Performance and Contribution to Dance in the West Indies. After attending a screening of Martha Graham's *A Dancer's World,* he planned to come to New York to study at the Graham School. After Clive Thompson arrived in the United States in August 1960, he was granted a scholarship at the Martha Graham School, and what followed was his short début in a leading rôle during the recent New York season of Martha Graham, when he made a profound effect.

Arthur Todd.

GISELLE

continued from page 16.

body to think that he would be right for the Paris Opéra's *Giselle*, presumably because he once achieved a successful forest — it boiled-up into a major designing disaster completely out of tune with the nature of Adam's score and completely out of shape with the rounded-off edges of the whole story conception.

In Russia at the Bolshoi (we yet have to see what the Kirov did) they learned their lesson and in the city that gave stage for some of this century's most advanced theatrical designing "isms" (Meierhold's constructivist *Turandot* preceded Sean Kenny's constructivist *Oliver* by well over 30 years) they give a *Giselle* deeply embedded in the oldest "ism" of all — traditionalism. And the same goes for the *Giselle* of the Royal Danish Ballet.

In England we have mercifully never tried to do funny and clever things with old Romantic ballets, and a great deal of this is due to Cyril Beaumont, whose book *The Ballet Called Giselle* has made it pretty clear to producers and designers just where they should go in this ballet.

Hugh Stevenson, who designed the *Giselle* for Ballet Rambert and also for London's Festival Ballet, worked in close consultation with Beaumont, with the result that what he did for Rambert still amounts to the best designed production of this ballet that we have in England. For their first big opera house production of *Giselle* after the war, the Royal Ballet went to a young and then comparatively unknown designer, James Bailey, and he too must undoubtedly have consulted Beaumont's book, if not the famous historian himself. Anyway the result was very traditional though the first production had a tendency towards over-elaboration. A few years later Bailey re-designed the ballet and simplified a number of details, though the basic "shape" of the production was little changed.

With what has rather stupidly come to be called the "new" production of *Giselle* Bailey has also had a chance of making a few more changes and, with one rather serious exception, these changes are mainly for the better. And this "serious exception" had better be dealt with first because it casts its even shadow over the whole of the first act.

As the attentive of you must know, *Giselle* falls into two very distinct halves. The first act being a realistic tragedy and the second act a fantasy or, shall we say, an elaborate ghost story. Unless you can believe in the realism of the first act's tragedy, the second act becomes nothing so much as a *ballet blanc divertissement* rather like Fokine's *Les Sylphides*. It would seem therefore that the village of the first act must be a place where people live, breathe and have their being, and that the villagers must look like people who do all these rather essential things. Now how, in the name of Myrthe and all the Wilis, can you possibly believe in a bunch of village girls dressed identically (ordinary village girls in orange, closer friends in a turquoisy green), and looking like nothing so much as a chorus line in an old Daly's musical comedy. Whether this was Bailey's fault or those responsible for the "new" production I would not know, but frankly it makes mincemeat of the whole idea of the first act — its being visually uninteresting and dramatically ludicrous. It is made even more stupid with the addition of some dancing boys who have managed a certain amount of sartorial variety.

It's this sort of idiotic mistake which makes one wonder whether anybody in ballet ever delves deeply into what the whole things is about. Maybe some of you are sick of ballets with a story and just want to have endless so-called abstract works, but if we are to have ballets with a story — and few ballets have more story than does *Giselle*, which is one of the reasons why it has survived for over 120 years — then let the story be presented in a way that engenders belief in it. The straight theatre still has a lot of lessons to teach ballet.

Having blown my top about this seemingly minor fault which has a major effect on the production, I will add that the rest of this act looked very good. The lighting has been greatly improved and the sunlight really appears to be coming through trees instead of suffusing the stage in a flood of light which would never naturally happen in a place with so many overhanging branches. The cottage of Giselle's mother and that other cottage, or whatever it is supposed to be, have now been painted so that they grow into their surroundings. There is rather too much green in the trees for vintage time and Bailey has a curious tendency to paint his foreground wings in a rather impressionistic way, while there is quite a lot of detail on his backcloth, and this upsets the perspective.

There is a new tangerine costume for the girl in the peasant *pas de deux*, Albrecht has a hip-length tunic and the Duke and his retinue have been toned down to shades of oranges and browns. All these things are an enormous improvement and do much to break the monotony of the unimaginative chorus-line.

Of course in the second act it matters not that the Wilis all look the same as that is their nature and is part of their fate. The fact that Giselle herself is slightly different does not matter in the least because she is a novice Wili, not yet fully fledged, and James Bailey has designed one of the best second-act costumes for her that I have ever seen. The skirt is of uneven lengths of tulle and this gives it a lightness and ease for dancing,and the fact that it floats about her creates an impression of ethereality. The only fault that I can find with all these Wili costumes is that they have a shade too much glitter; there seems no real reason why they should all have a liberal sprinkling of sequins as it gives them all an unwanted chic. I wonder why no designers today turn the Wilis into wild and nasty demonic creatures as did Pavlova in her production. Now they all seem to be a bunch of such nice respectable ladies.

This second act setting creates the appropriate atmosphere, and as far as it goes could hardly be better. I only wish that, while an attempt is being made to turn this production into an important one, it could go a good deal further. It needs a great deal more magic — Wilis flying again as in the first production at Covent Garden, Wilis materialising out of trees, Wilis alighting on leaves, and why can't we have those flowers shooting up from the earth as Giselle descends into her grave — well managed it could make a charming final effect.

I was glad to see the waning moon back in the sky, but it seems a pity that the rays which illuminate the stage appear to come from quite another source. And the light on the grave for Giselle's descent, presumably from the rising sun, was, on the occasions that I saw it, of a very paltry nature, and this very important episode took place in almost total darkness.

Sometimes the artistic policy of the Royal Ballet flummoxes me. Why, if you are going to the trouble and expense of re-furbishing a production, have the "improvements" got to be so piecemeal? The faults I have mentioned above are glaring ones, and I cannot imagine that they were not also obvious to those in charge. When everything is so much better it is a pity that extra effort was not put into making it best, for there is absolutely no reason why the Royal Ballet should not have the finest production of *Giselle* in the world. Financial expenditure does not come into it, simple theatrical knowledge and common sense does. Perhaps if a little pride-swallowing went on and Franco Zeffirelli were invited to take a few hours off from producing *Falstaff*, we might find that we were getting somewhere.

Peter Williams.

Ballet Dates

THE ROYAL BALLET
at the Royal Opera House

May — Covent Garden

27 **(M)** *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Page, Hynd).
29 *Giselle* (Fonteyn, Somes).
31 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Nerina, Blair).

June

2 *Giselle* (Linden, Gilpin).
3 **(E)** *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Beriosova, Macleary).

End of season

15 The Kirov Theatre, Leningrad.
25 (approx.). The Bolshoi Theatre.

The next Royal Ballet season at Covent Garden opens about September 11.

THE ROYAL BALLET
May — (Touring Section)

5 The Streatham Hill Theatre, Streatham Hill.
12 The Hippodrome, Golders Green.
19 The Odeon Theatre, Southend.
26 The Theatre Royal, Norwich.

THE LENINGRAD STATE KIROV BALLET
at the Royal Opera House,

June — Covent Garden

19 *The Stone Flower.*
20 *The Stone Flower.*
21 *The Stone Flower.*
22 *The Stone Flower.*
23 *The Sleeping Beauty.*
24 **(M)** *The Sleeping Beauty.*
24 **(E)** *The Sleeping Beauty.*
26 *The Sleeping Beauty.*
27 *Giselle.*
28 *Giselle.*
29 *Giselle.*
30 *Swan Lake.*

July

1 **(M)** *Swan Lake.*
1 **(E)** *Swan Lake.*
3 *Swan Lake.*
4 Gala Programme *(Chopiniana, Taras Bulba, The Nutcracker, Shadows,* etc.).
5 Gala Programme.
6 *Giselle.*
7 *Giselle.*
8 **(M)** Gala Programme.
8 **(E)** *The Stone Flower.*
10 Gala Programme.
11 *Swan Lake.*
12 *Swan Lake.*
14 *The Sleeping Beauty.*
15 **(M)** *The Sleeping Beauty.*
15 **(E)** *The Sleeping Beauty.*

BALLET RAMBERT

June

6-9 L.C.C. tour of Secondary Schools.
12 King's Theatre, Southsea.
19 The Theatre Royal, Brighton.

July

17 The Sadler's Wells Theatre (2 weeks).

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June

27-31 Teatro San Carlo, Naples.

June

5-11 Teatro del Opera, Rome.
13, 14 Théâtre du Casino, Geneva.
15-17 Théâtre Beaulieu, Lausanne.
20-23 Teatro Communale, Florence.

July

17-Sept. 16 The Royal Festival Hall, London.

WESTERN THEATRE BALLET

June

12 The Little Theatre, Bristol.
19 The Taynton Festival, near Gloucester.
26 The Lincoln Theatre, Lincoln.

July

24 The Repertory Theatre, Northampton.
31 The Repertory Theatre, Birmingham (2 weeks).

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May

22 The Royal Court, Liverpool.
29 The Hippodrome, Coventry.

June

3 The Grand Theatre, Blackpool.
12 The New Theatre, Cardiff.
19 The Grand Theatre, Leeds.
26 The Opera House, Manchester.

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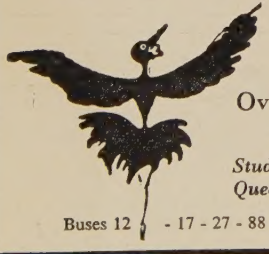

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